

PRAYĀG-TIRTHA.

A DRAMA

(An Abridged transcription in English of the Bengali Drama)

Basing on The Mythological anecdotes narrated in the Bengali Mahabharat by the late poet Kashiram,
Regarding the sanctity of the Ganges-Jumna
Confluence at Prayag (Allahabad), a celebrated place of Hindu pilgrimage.

BY

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PREFACE.

‘Tools rush in where angels fear to tread’
To myself this proverb is quite appropriate.
But my foolishness may have an example set
Which to follow perhaps one will not hesitate.
We, the Hindus, do believe in ‘Life after death’;
Our doctrines say we can in no way leave that faith,
While India of, now-a-days says in a breath
Hindu mythology spreads a superstitious faith.
Superstition may be called an unsound belief,
But let us see if it does any good or mischief,
It teaches us to live in awe of God the Chief,
And our cult is—‘Life is nothing but his fief,’
Hindu mythology kills an atheist’s sophistry ;
To show God’s existence straight is its ministry ;
When mythology was a nation’s history,
Men were simple and knew little treachery.
Modern ways of living and thinking us beguile,
Tempt us to leave the Ganges-bank, love the far Nile,
In pictorial love modern India smile,
Which go to make the remembrance of God fragile.
There are now youths of high English literature,
To transcribe Bengali who need no erasure,
But to spread over all world classic light few care,
To copy others their sole pleasure and treasure.

ii.

Pleasure and treasure are not our life's goal,
In our life's journey we are to pay many a toll;
We should n't therefore, be mere buffoons to roll,
The list of true actors let us henceforth enroll.

New ideas and thoughts turn us to be half-west
If in the West mythologic plots we can invest,
Our mythological plots may make the West half-East
Should not the thing form a part of young men's
feast ?

Every man is supposed to have some frailty,
To face public censure I may be a party.
Good readers ! Pardon my ragged activity
Which displays no educational subtlety.

For over thirty-two years I was a clerk drowsy,
Unless I be busy, me may attack Palsy,
Let me transcribe my drama in English flimsy,
So to harp our young dormant minstrelsy.

In British Dominions the sun never sets.
To my mind India's past story dictates
"The British are God-sent people." Live in their
tents.

I believe, old India's gods, goddesses and saints.
So I leave it to the honour of an English author
To give this mythologic plot tongue, tinge proper
To be acted with nicety in an English Theatre ;
The world may see then Hindu mythology's glitter.

This is is no flattering eulogy. I lost my father at the age of fourteen years. He was a clerk in the Comptroller and Auditor General's office, Calcutta. After his death an office

friend and neighbour of his took me to the C. G.'s office. The then Asst. C. G.—Mr. J. Taylor and Messrs C. S. Roston, E. J. Robertson, N. Lucas and other English gentlemen (whose names I cannot recollect at this distant period) who knew my father gave away to me what they had found in their pockets and heaved a sigh of grief, so far as I can remember now, saying “ You are not Gopinath's boy.”

In my educational career I received kind help from the Revd. John Hector, Principal of the Duff College and Free Church Institution, Calcutta and from his dear consort also.

In my official career I received unexpectedly kind and just treatment (in the face of opposition from my immediate superior) from four Deputy Director-Generals of the Post office of India who were all members of the Indian Civil Service—Mr. A. T. Forbes, Mr. H. N. Hutchinson. Mr. G. R. Clarke (afterwards Sir Geoffrey Clarke. D.G. of P. & T. India). Mr. H. A. Sams (afterwards Sir Hubert Sams D.G. of P. & T. India). For all these high-minded gentlemen I bear a deep sense of gratitude in my heart. I heartily thank God that he has spared me to make a grateful mention of the names of these generous gentlemen in this my little book.

Humble writer.

List of Personages to appear on the Scene.

MALES

Siva ...	...	The Greatest of Hindu gods.
Sree Krishna ...	...	An incarnation of the Supreme God in heaven, Soverign of Dwarka.
Nandi (Nandi Kesar)		Siva's attendant.
Garuda ...	...	The Eagle bird, attendant of the supreme God in heaven.
Arjuna ...	...	Pandu's third son, bosom friend of Sree Krishna.
Brisaketu, Sātyaki, Kritabarmā, Pradumna, Jubanaswa, Subeg and Anusālwa.	} Leaders under Arjuna.	
Hansadhvaj ...	...	King of Bhadrabati kingdom
Sudhanwa & Surath	Princes of	„ „
Sankha ...	...	Family priest of „ „
Kotal ...	...	Head watchman of „
Dhanapati ...	...	A merchant of Oudh.
Lubdhak ...	...	A fowler in „

.(b)

Maudgalya ... A hermit.

Minister, Courtiers, Beggar boy (Sree Krishna in the guise of) Soldiers, Hermit boys and certain citizens.

FEMALES

Durgā	}	...	Wives of Siva.
Gangā			
Rukmini	...	...	Sree Krishna's first queen.
Queen	...	...	Queen of Bhadrabati kingdom.
Kubalayā	...	...	Princess of „
Pravābati	...	...	Sudhanwa's wife.
Brāhmini	...	...	Sankha's wife
Sumati	Dhanapati's wife.
Mālini	„ Maid Servant.
Kōtālīni	Head watchman's wife.

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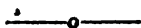
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Peterhouse - Cambridge, England.*

Devoted to -

As a token of affection & gratitude of service under his kind control

Humble writer,

Prayag-Tirtha



ACT I.

SCENE I.

Kuenlun Mountains, the abode of Siva.

(*Enter—Siva and Durga are seated on a throne, Ganga stands behind Siva and Nandi at the gate*)

(*Sings Nandi*)

Holy Ganges water flows over Siva's head,
A serpent hisses deep on his hair matted,
The lustre of moon is the lune on his forehead,
By his left, Himalaya's daughter* is seated.

With departed souls drifting aloft,
In frolics he is seen to smile oft,
Coating his body with ashes soft,
In a bewildering beauty he is dressed.
Round his neck wreath of bones is hung,
Round his waist tiger-skin is put on,
Mounting on the back of his bull strong,
He mutters his prayers, turning rosary bead.
In deep meditation he is engross'd,
With his two dark eyes tightly closed,
While Cupid, god of love, to ashes blaz'd

*Durga, goddess Kali, is said to have been born of the Himalaya Mountains to become Siva's wife.

By the flash of the lune-shap'd eye on his forehead.
 His left-hand holds a spear three-pointed,
 To destroy the clans of demons wicked,
 To warn them of the raid contemplated,
 A huge war-drum is being ceaselessly beat.
 O' Blessed orgin of all beings,
 From Thee goddess of kindness springs,
 I pray to Thee to have my feelings
 To Thine soft and red lotus-feet closely tied.

Siva—O' Daughter of the King of mountains!
 Arrange please,
 For my devotional prayer being done at ease;
 For the satisfaction of the supreme Deity,
 Mahesh¹ would offer worship to the Almighty.
(Exit Durga)

(Aside)

Haribôle ! Haribôle !²

This Dwapara Juga³ is coming to a close,
 "Sree Hari," blissful Paradise whose seat of
 repose,
 Has now incarnated Him as Sree Krishna on
 earth
 The crescent Kshatriya strength to cripple in
 mirth.
 Relieving the earth of this increasing burden,
 He will soon return to His abode in heaven.

1. Epithet of Siva.

2. A pious utterance glorifying the name of the supreme God "Sree Hari" in heaven.

3. The third age of the world.

Goddess Ganga who is three worlds' deliverer
For ages long graces India as a river,
Some legends of India I would hear from her,
Also her views about her stay there further.

(Openly)

How Suradhuni,¹ are you passing days
In India, in this world's third brilliant stage?

Ganga—Methinks, Pasupati,² you know all quite
well,

My days on earth, in this age, are miserable.

Listen to then, please, what I have got to say

And the reason why I cannot at all be gay:—

Sage Vasistha, blind with a sudden wrath,

Curs'd the Vasus³ to take mortal forms on earth.

To save them from this sad and bad imprecation

I turned myself to a nymph-like formation,

Wedded Santanu,⁴ of his time, the noblest king,

And spent some years with him as his loving

queen.

Through the king in my womb, one by one,

I bore them,

And drown'd seven of them to death as out

they came.

1. The epithet of Ganga.

2. Epithet of Siva.

3. Demi-gods.

4. Vishma's father, forefather of the Kauravas and Pandavas.

Thus freed from their painful malediction
They retired to their own habitation.

A condition of my wedding I had with the king,
That, if hindered in my ways, I would quit him.
Killing the eighth son was by the king opposed,
So with that child I vanished as was pledged.
For eighteen years I reared the child with care,
Got him train'd by Parashuram¹ in arts of
warfare,

And when he thoroughly mastered archery,
He was sent back to soften his father's misery.
From his nativity "Devabrata" was his name,
Time changed it to Vishma, a hero of fame.
He could have lived long to a distant time far,
But for the Kuru²-Pandavas' feud and war ;
In a fight at Kurukshetra³ he was laid
By Arjuna with Sree Krishna's artful aid.
A human mother's feelings still my heart infest,
Grief for this last son awfully burns my breast.
Janhâh,⁴ brave queen of Niladhwaja chieftain
Has doubly enhanced my that very pain ;
She drown'd herself to death in my holy water
With a view to receive my boundless favour.
Thus she got rid of her anguish severe

1. The greatest archer warrior who is said to have annihilated the Kshatriya dynasties twenty-one times.

2. Kauravas. 3. Battle field near Thaneswar. 4. A devotee of the goddess Ganga.

She felt for the death of Prabir, her son so dear.
 Having killed lots of relations and kinsmen
 The Pandavs have got Hastina¹ throne to reign.
 The sin of slaying kinsmen pain'd them at last,
 And they began to think how to blot it out fast.
 So Yudhishthira² performs a horse-sacrifice,
 Conforming to the great sage Vyasa's³ advice.
 The horse for sacrifice ranges abroad, far and
wide,

Tricky Arjuna is his protector and guide.
 For the horse, with Prabir, a fight took place
 In which he was kill'd by Arjuna quite merciless.
 In India, isn't there an archer warrior
 Who can challenge Arjuna to combat on car,
 Defeat and kill him in a fight, foul or fair,
 And thus crush the Pandava's pride for ever ?
 Ah ! Now I could remember aright and well,
 How and why in such a pride he could swell :—
 Fought he with you bravely in a duel fight,
 And so very pleas'd you were with his might
 That you gave away your "Pashupat"⁴ weapon,
 Welcoming him as your favourite son.

1. Ancient name of the Delhi kingdom
2. Eldest brother of Arjuna, who was crowned king after victory of the Kurukshetra battle. . Eighteen battles were fought there.
3. The great sage who composed the Sanskrit Mahabharata.
4. An unparalleled arm, with its help Arjuna was victorious in many battles.

Siva—With Sree Krishna invincible

the Pandavas are,
But they 'ill suffer defeats when He keeps afar.
I 've heard from Nandi my true follower thus,
From him no information 'false ever comes,
"On Arjuna the Vasus have pronounced curse
That he be kill'd by his son whom' he didn't
nurse.

You, too, have approved of that malison,
As a revenge for killing your dear son."
Do you want to have another harm done?
Two punishments are ne'er awarded for sin one.

Ganga—There is another great cause of my
sorrow;
Listen please, as you like to hear, though all you
know:

In India, in the Golden' age of the world,
It is told you had a nice city built of gold,
By the funny name of 'Kasi' it is called;
There, to a queen's seat my co-wife was install'd.
Some time, before your created queen,
Personating yourself as a beggar mean,
You begged alms in the shape of boil'd rice,

1. Arjuna married the princess of Manipur Kingdom and didn't know that a son was born of her. The son's name was Babhrubahan. When engaged in a battle for the sacrificial horse Arjuna was shot dead but was restored to life with the help of nectar.

2. First stage of the world.

When she favour'd you with a very rich dish,
 Thus pleasing you she got "Annapurna"
surname,
 Up to this age, her new name is sung amain;
 Saints say, by your gift, famine-stricken people
 Will get food and drink at Kasi on arrival.
 Their sayings seem to me to be the presage
 Of my co-wife's pride to rise more in the next
age.

Is Ganga then to remain on earth as a river
 Sins of Iron¹ age on her head only to bear?
 Free my flow, Dhurjati,² from your knot of hair,
 I want to go back to my Almighty³ father,
 At once by the passage through the atmosphere,
 I won't remain on this vile earth any longer.
 Dirts and dead bodies float o'er my breast
I can let,
 But a co-wife's proud grimace my heart won't
tolerate.

Siva—Your glory in the Iron age greatly to
spread,
 Sree Krishna will suffer His great devotee's
head

1. Fourth stage of the world.

2. Epithet of Siva. 3. The mythological allusion is that from the sweat of supreme God "Sree Hari's" feet the holy Ganges has sprung. King Bhagirath of the Sagar dynasty by prayer brought her down to earth to deliver his forefathers who were burnt to ashes by the wrath of the great sage Kapila.

To be cut and thrown on your sacred water,
 With you where unites your Jumna sister.
 For the sacrificial horse, I can foresee,
 A fight will be fought in Bhadrabati city,
 In which Arjuna will meet with a dire defeat
 At the hands of prince Sudhanwa, a warrior
 meet.

Arjuna will dart a missile against his foe,
 Which will be struck down midway by his
 rival's arrow.
 But Vishnu's deceptive art will make the missile
 start
 Which'll soon set Sudhanwa's body and head
 apart.

Lastly, Garuda, Vishnu's' follower in heaven,
 At the command of his master, now
 Sree Krishna,
 Will, from the field, bring Sudhanwa's severed
 head
 And drop it down to dive in the Ganges-
 Jumna bed.
 The head's touch will make Prayag a high
 holy place,
 Brightness of Kasi'll grow dim before whose
 holiness.

[*Re-enters Durga*]

Durga—I've heard, O' Sankara² all from the
screen behind,
Ah me! Dearer to you watery Ganga do I find!
Such nice coaxing words to make her bright!
Where was Ganga, your so very favourite,
The day when drank you the venom of serpent
king
And lay faint in death-bed as a mortal being?
'Twas I who blunted the sharpness of the poison'
By dint of my phenomenal emanation;
From stomach the venom was rais'd to your
throat,
Remember, you were thus to life restored.
Your white throat then turn'd to a darkish azure,
So you were surnam'd 'Nilkantha'² since the
days of yore.
Well Ganga! Sporting as you are o'er
husband's head,
Surpris'd I'm, a co-wife's malice still can't be
left!
From the Himalayas down to the sea you have
a flow,

I. Mythological allusion—The gods made the Mandar Hill a churning stick and the Serpent king 'Vasuki' the cord and then stirred the sea to get nectar to escape death at the hands of the demons with whom they had to fight. The serpent vomitted foam of poison and Siva drank it off and lay faint in death when his life was saved by goddess Kali.

2. Epithet of Siva.

Beyond Kasi, downwards, your glory'll lose its glow ;
 From half-way thereafter, with floods sudden,
 You'll break, at times, banks and sweep off
 creatures thereon,
 All your fame sages have hitherto got to narrate
 Will only rest where you with the sea have met.
 From sin my name 'Durga' will deliver all men,
 The touch of your water none will need again.

(*Exit Gan̄ga*)

Siva—To what you said, Digambarā,¹ I did attend,
Your words of reproach to Ganga must I mend.
Down would have sunk the earth under nether
region,
Had I not held on my head her fall² from
heaven.
Have you forgot all about your sylvan dance
When to kill the demons you were in a trance?
To bear your gestic feet, the earth to save,
Didn't I spread there this my chest, wide and
suave!
Words of past deeds will only bring in a dispute,

1. Epithet of Durga.

2. When king Bhagirath prayed to Ganga to come down to earth he was told to please Siva who alone is able to bear the weight of her fall from heaven. This being arranged, Ganga fell from heaven on Siva's head.

And you'll undress¹ yourself, which you can't
refute.

Now take my words, Sati,² save your husband's
prestige,
Retract your expressions of spite and say,
please;—

“In India Ganga's glory will live distinct,
Until Hindu religion is quite extinct.”
Knows well this fanatic, this trident-bearer,
Names—“Krishna and Kālī” differ in sex mere,
One represents Supreme God, other Supreme
Nature,
That's why to keep you pleased Siva should
prefer.

In India, brilliance of Kasi to preserve,
Your intents and purposes, rightly to serve,
I'll make a display of some wonderful sport
At your hands Sudhanwa's severed head to
transport.

Durga—My proper worship will not be held as
complete,
Unless Ganges water is sprinkled with it.
Gladly do I retract my words of spiteful curse,
Let Ganga's glory so shine as Siva desires.

(Exit Durga)

1. Goddess Kālī's picture as standing on Siva's breast represents the fact that after killing the demons she was mad for further war. The earth trembled under her ecstatic dance. When she found that she stood on her husband's breast she came to her senses and spread out her tongue in shame. 2. Surname of Durga.

SCENE II.

City of Oudh—Merchant Dhanapati's Mansion.

(Inner apartment)

• (*Enter Dhanapati and Sumati*)

Dhanapati— (*Aside*)

Thinking man's happiness rests in riches,
I labour'd hard and acquired money countless,
But in it I could not get full satisfaction.
Then fondly did I think again and often,
That home-life blest with a good wife and a son
Could bring me happiness beyond comparison.
So I, having this beautiful mansion built,
Wedded this Sumati, fair and accomplish'd ;
With her in pleasure and fun all my youth was
spent,
The age of a full grown adult I've now attain'd.
But the sole delight that a householder enjoys,
That divine gift—an issue—my lot denies.
Surely He who has created the universe
To my utter misfortune is deeply averse.
To get a son I duly performed rites endless,
Over and above made gifts to beggars helpless.
Vain—all vain—all proved fruitless labour,
But there's a hearsay—a strong rumour:
The radiant glow of whose matchless beauty
Stupefies all the world with curiosity, A H .

That Deity incarnating Him as boy Krishna
Upto this day strolls on the banks of the Jumna,
Sings or dances sometimes at his own sweet will,
Or flutes under the Kadamba tree standing still.
My heart wants to get him as son, I know not
why !

Must I go there the rumour to verify.
But to take care of Sumati who is there !
I can't say with what love I'm tied to her.
If in a bustle of mind any time I say,
Leaving her here I w'd fain go away.
Her eyes half-suffused with tears droop down
And get me bound tighter with worldly concern.
As mov'd by the blow of wind a tender creeper
Winds more firmly the tree that is her shelter.
But if in Sumati's cause I'm so engaged,
The pith of the world will e'er remain unsearch'd.
I'll go off any how leaving her to her fate,
Won't cast a look again at her face delicate.

Sumati—O my love ! What has befallen you?
Why do I find you so melancholy for the past
few days ? You look also absent-minded, as if
your attention is engaged in some particular
thought ! It is scarcely morn and you are up
and appear to be brooding over something se-
rious. Will you speak out what pains you ? I
don't find there to be any grave cause for your

mental dejection! By the grace of God you are above all wants.. He has given you riches enough to live a comfortable life. You have attendants ready to do your biddings at any moment. What then brings such a depression on your mind ?

Dhanapati—Ah ! Dear Sumati ! Woman as you are, how can you know the pangs of a man's heart? True, I have wealth enough to live comfortably, a beautiful house to live in, a good wife like yourself to please me and attendants ready at my beck and call, still some disinctu^u craving has filled my mind with unrest. I am deprived of that divine blessing—a child born of us to inherit my hard-earned property—so that I may meet death peacefully when it comes. You know already “To be gifted with a son all sorts of legendary rites were performed but to no purpose.”

Sumati—Eh Dear! Is this the cause of your so much mental agony ? With this trifling cause you are troubling yourself ! A prudent man you are, what shall I say to convince you ! The matter with which you are puzzling your head concerns more a woman than a man ; without a child a woman generally feels this sort of dis-

gust. A man you are, you need hardly bother your head with this womanly thought. Just think and make yourself cheerful :—To earn money men labour hard, sometimes pinch their belly and strip their back for the accumulation of wealth for their issue to enjoy and live a life of ease. But Ah ! Don't you observe that in most cases the amassed money is squandered by their issue in games and useless pursuits, rather detestable pursuits in approbrious houses of shame ! Unfortunate surely we are, as we are childless. But what of that ! Can't we make ourselves cheerful by making a good use of our money in our lifetime ? Certainly we can. (To divert her husband's mind.) By the bye, I would like to say—can't recollect whether I told you this before or not : sometime ago I was asked by my mother and other ladies to go with them on a pilgrimage to Kasi, Gaya, etc. You know I don't feel happy anywhere without your company. So I declined. I was railed at : "Sumi's is a barren life, still she doesn't like the expense of a pilgrimage." This wounded my heart. I see you have lost your mind's peace. Won't it be good if we both started on a pilgrimage to holy places ? If you mind, let us proceed today,

1. "Sumi" is a contraction of the name 'Sumati.'

On return if your mind be at ease, a temple dedicated to some god may be built with an adjoining wide hall from where to make a free distribution of proper food and drink to the poor, to the helpless, to the lame and blind. I think, if our money is expended on some such good cause, grief and discomfort for being destitute of children will cease to trouble us. Methinks this a suitable means to make us happy in our present situation. But if you don't approve, we must look for an adopted son. What would you like to say ?

Dhanapati—Yes, something will have to be done later. But I think I should go out for a travel abroad for a few days alone.

Sumati—What do you mean by 'a travel abroad'? If it is on business, I have got nothing to say, but if it be for a pilgrimage, I must accompany you. I won't let you go alone.

(*Enter Malini*)

Malini—Sweet madam ! A bright lad, brightest of the bright, has come to our doors to beg alms. Would you care to come out once and see the lovely boy and give him what you like ?

Sumati—(Towards her husband). If you intend

to go to visit holy places, I beseech you not to leave me behind. I am just coming back and will make arrangements for your morning prayer.

Dhanapati—Very well, as it suits you best.

(Aside)

The Shastras' strictly enjoin

Not to travel abroad with women.

Malini—Make haste, dear sister ! The beggar boy may go away by your delay. Bring with you what you please to give away. I go now.

(Exit Malini)

Sumati—Your looks show you are quite absent-minded. I am coming back shortly. Please do not be off in the meantime. I have a further talk with you about other things.

(Exit Sumati, speaking to herself)

A tender lad, out to beg alms ! He has no father, no mother, I suppose. I must try to induce him to live in our house as our son. If successful, my husband's uneasiness will, perhaps, be removed. When he is cheerful I shall be happy too. Let me see what is decreed by fate.

Dhanapati—*(Aside)*

This report of the arrival of a beggar boy fills

my mind with an emotion. But what it is I fail to detect. Be it whatever it may. This is the favourable moment to leave the house—a mere dove-cot it is—I must leave it now ; when she returns it will be difficult to avoid her. If possible, I shall try to see the boy unnoticed.

[*Exit Dhanapati*]

Outer Apartment.

[*Sree Krishna in the guise of a
beggar boy standing*]

Enter—Malini followed by Sumati.

Beggar boy—Give me alms, good lady !

Sumati—Ah ! I see, Malini, the lad is just so as you told me, of a bright complexion just like the moon. (*To the beggar boy*). Dear child ! At so tender an age you are out to beg alms ? Perhaps you have none to call you his own. A quite green boy you are. Aha ! Your soft face must raise motherly affection in every woman's heart. Dear boy ! Will you keep a word of mine, if I speak out my mind ? Why no answer ? Hear me child : we have no issue ; would you care to live with us as our dear son ? Very glad shall we be to get you. We will feed and nourish you with all parental care, sweet

child ! Mind you to keep my words. Make us cheerful. We will remove all your wants. For a handful of rice you won't have any more to suffer the vexations of running from door to door with an alms-bowl hung on your soulder. You will be admitted to a life of joy. On our death we will bequeath to you all we have : we will also get you married to a finest girl when you will attain proper age. Why silent, my darling ? Why no answer ? Won't you prefer this ? Take alms,—but what help will it do to you ?

Beggar boy—Thanks, gracious lady, for your kind words.

(Sings the beggar boy)

Breaking chains of love to parents I'm off home.

Life's wrongs to mend, ease to get to stoical path I'm gone.

I've to make a search for the path,

Through which I've been brought to earth ;

Have fashion'd my days to their worth,

Renouncing worldly affairs, enjoyment and fun.

With the halter of love on my neck,

I'll cry out "Mother !" my vow to break,

You'll get me a wife my back to peck,—

Good lady, that hope you are to abandon.

Heavenly joys my heart impress,

In darkness, light or in distress.

By the light of Divine grace,

Scales of my inner eyes have fallen down.

From path to path I daily wander,

For a handful of rice, door to door,
By the blessing of my preceptor,
Weight of this alms-bowl as nothing I reckon.

(Exit the beggar boy)

Malini—Mad you must be, dear madam, to want to keep in the house an unknown boy as a foster child—a street boy especially. I can bring you a Brahmin lad of good parentage if you so desire.

Sumati—How this can be ? Baniyas we are : why would a Brahmin boy condescend to become our adopted son ?

Malini—Mistaken I'm, dear madam. For "adopted son" I meant a charity¹ boy. But I must see what I can do for you.

[Exit Sumati]

Inner Apartment.

Sumati—(Speaking to herself when entering her bed chamber)

Alas ! My ill luck ! What we long for can hardly be got. Oh ! What a good looking lad !

1. Barren ladies sometime take Brahmin boys after their investiture with holy thread to become their formal sons with a view to avoiding damnation to which childless parents are doomed, when they leave this world. This was a customary rite once in Bengal.

Whoever sees him will be eager to take him on her lap. The rays of full moon are coming out, as it were, from his face. O' my Love ! Had you viewed him even from a distance, you would have run after him to bring him back. He looks like the son of some Rishi.¹ No wonder that he is so or how could he venture on leaving house at an age so tender ! (Not finding her husband in the room) My dear ! Why am I getting no answer ? Where are you gone in so short a time ? Malini ! Malini ! Come in here at once.

(Enter Malini)

Malini—Why do you call me, Bau-didi ?² What is the matter ?

Sumati—I don't find your Dada-Babu³ in the room. See where he is gone. Find him out.

Malini—Only a few minutes ago I saw you both talk together. Where may he be gone so soon ! He was here when I asked you to come out to

1. Sages who live a home life in hermitage.

2. Maid-servants generally call their mistress of lesser age by "Bau-didi" meaning sister-in-law.

3. Mistresses of younger age generally refer to their husbands, when speaking with the maid servants, as "Dada-Babu" meaning brother-in-law

see the beggar boy. There was not much delay. You waited in the outer apartment only for a short time to hear him sing and are back again ; where may he be gone in the meantime !

Sumati—For my barrenness he was sick at heart. He was saying he felt disgusted with this sort of home life, expressed a desire to go abroad for a few days. We had a talk about that when you called me to see the beggar boy. Coming back, I do not find your Dada-Babu in the inner apartment. Just find him out.

Malini—He must have viewed the lad from behind, and heard also what you told the boy. Like ourselves he, too, was perhaps charmed with the look of the boy. Surely he has gone out to catch the boy and bring him round. Why so anxious ! He will be back soon.

Sumati—I can't see what he will do. My mind is unsettled. My attempts to induce the boy to live with us failed. Your Dada-Babu has also gone out, where I do not know. What should I do here alone now ! Let us go to take a secret bath in the holy waters of the Saraju. On our return journey I intend to see the images of Rama and Sita. Let me see, if in doing so, my mind's worry is removed.

Malini—Very well. In times of difficulty we should do pious deeds. But it is too late for a river bath at a distant place. The way to the Saraju is not also safe. Shouldn't we take a man-servant with us ?

Sumati—Don't bubble much. I say I am going to take secret bath. No need of a man-servant. Let us take with us the parrot, if you like.

Malini—All right ! Then prepare yourself. I am coming back shortly after talking to my old mother, lest she should be anxious for my long absence.

(*Exit Malini*)

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE III

Dense forest on the bank of the river Saraju.

(*Enter Lubdhak singing and dancing*)

[*Sings Lubdhak*]

Eh ! Birds of the wood ! my brothers, where you are !

Traverse I this wood as your sister's lover.

This earth keeps in immense treasure,

I can't get food to full measure ;

I've to sell your flesh and feather—

In this way my daily bread I'm to gather.

Come out from the bush, take a shot,

Let this arrow take your blood ;
Make you roll down on this spot,
So that I may fill in empty bags lying there.
Very cautiously live I,
In me a blot I cannot spy ;
In the day, birds I destroy.
As way-farer, too, I decoy ;
But my doings at night I cannot account for.

Why my shots failed to tell today ! I must have seen, when the day dawned, some body's face, too inauspicious. My shots flew past some birds, touched some on the wings, hit others on the legs but could'nt bring a single one to the ground. Ah ! When my shots bring these brothers-in-law to the ground they chirp out in pain, roll on the earth. What a pleasure do I feel then ! Killing birds every day in this way I do not now fear to rob and kill a fellowman, if found alone in this path. This day, I see, my labours are lost. It is past noon ; I failed to kill a single bird nor do I find a single man or woman whom I may victimise. Anyhow I am to get some money for hemp to smoke, and for meeting also the wine shop's demand at night or my mind will not be at rest. It is high time ; there is no chance. What should I do now ? I must wait for some time more. Let me lie in ambush, taking my usual stand behind that big tree.

(*Enter Sumati, Malini with the parrot in hand*)

(*The parrot utters as taught to say*)

“My inner spirit ! Read the name ‘Harey Krishna’ !¹ ‘Harey Rama’ !”

Lubdhak—Bravo ! Ah ! At the distance are seen to come along this path both—a bird and two way-farers. Good luck, if they fall under my sway ! Patience is bitter but its fruits are sweet. Let them advance a little. Now I keep off as before (Seeing Sumati) A fine creature ! A beauty so graceful my eyes never caught sight of. A fairy as it were, down from heaven. Many beautiful ladies pass this way but none was seen to have such a roundish grace of limbs. I won’t kill her but can’t let her pass untouched. By threats or inducement she will have to be brought to submit to my will.

(As Sumati and Malini drew near, he came out with a high-jump before them—*Openly*)

Who comes there ? Who you ? Give correct reply or you can’t pass safe. Stop there. I’ll soon make your soul-bird leave the cage of your body. Which place are you making for stealthily under this high sun ? With whom you

1. Surname of supreme Deity.

have engagement ? Speak out. Give correct reply.

Malini—See sister ! What I feared has happened. (To the fowler) Sire ! What do you want ? Perhaps you'd like to take away our ornaments. For that you need not trouble yourself. We are handing them over to you—a trifling matter it is, but pray do not take our lives, dear—dear sir !

Lubdhak—Oh ! No. Your ornaments I don't desire. Look here. I am the monarch of this forest and the neighbouring places. None can cross safely this path who do not serve my desired end first. No fear of life. I don't want any thing but the beauty—your companion. Such a beauty never crossed my sight before. I am enamoured of her. If she yields softly, so much so good, or I must nab her and make her submit to my will. From my terrible grasp who is here to rescue her ! Ask her, if she's agreeable to my purpose,

Sumati—(*Aside*)

Still speaks of beauty ! At an age so advanced ! I see women's good grace and bright complexion is often a risk to them. The scoundrel appears

to have been charmed with my fairness of skin. A sinner always lacks courage. I do feel now—failing to get that fine lad, I have been proving, as it were, under an irony of fate—under some trial from God. But anyhow I'm to keep woman's honour. Good Heaven! Help me (picking large pieces of stone—*Openly*) A rogue! A reprobate! What do you say? So much boldness! Darest thou touch me! Get off from my sight at once! Quickly! If you move one step further, this stone will smash your head."

(Lubdhak falls back. Sumati and Malini run off and passing by him reach the river side)

Heavenly Father! Almighty Father! Protect me Thine daughter! Malini! Let us get down soon into deep water. If we are faced by still greater perils, we must embrace death by drowning ourselves rather than lose our honour.

Lubdhak—(Following them) Ah! My Beauty! All your vaunting I can make low. Stupefied I am by your charming grace, so you are living still, or this arrow would have ended your life. Hear me, please, I keenly desire to have your love. Give me your name and address. I won't kill you. I give you an assurance of safety.

Malini—My name is Malini! hers is Sumati. She is wife of Dhanapati, merchant of Ou—(dh).

Sumati—Stop Malini ! Let *me* give him a reply. Scoundrell! A profligate! Villain! Hear me:—

“A Sati¹ her own life does care a fig for. She knows how to keep her honour in the face of danger. For thee to hit upon, I bend my head here. Thinkest never, even in a dream, for fear of life to thy vile wish I shall submit. Seest thou how I keep my honour by drowning myself to death.

Hear me again :—

Thou base Chandal?! Thy very presence before our sight we consider as filthy and to clean ourselves to purity we take a bath. A dog thou, and hast a greed for purified butter meant for worship ! A dwarf thou, and desirest to get at the moon ! Feelest thou, if so much lust for a beauty, takest my advice. Submittest thyself to the Chandrayan³ penance. On thy lips takest thou constantly the name of God, that thy accumulated sins be washed away. Then thy next birth might be in a higher caste. This will enable thee to get a beautiful wife far more beautiful than myself. Now keepest off from

1. Devoted wife.

2. A low caste Hindu.

3 A penance regulated by the waning and waxing of the moon.

my sight or seest thou standing there how I save myself by embracing death before thy very face. Cherishest not the faintest hope to have a touch of me while in life. Thou rsguel Meanest of the mean ! Thou profligate, villain ! Be off at once.

Lubdhak—Ah ! Graceful lady ! I can't conceive a lady ever born on earth more beautiful than yourself. If there be one such, I don't want her. My heart wants you and you only. Your voice seems to me sweeter than your complexion. So your direction I must follow from this day. Don't kill yourself by drowning, I pray. I won't molest you, now I give you this assurance from the bottom of my heart. Do not disbelieve me. I give up fowler's occupation from to-day. Must I go now to the junction of the two rivers, Ganga and Jumna, to offer due prayers to some god ! By the magical power of his name I hope to gather will-force sufficient to bring you under my sway. This is my vow—my earnest desire—the only way to conciliation. Knowest for certain I must get you in this life. Little faith I keep in the life to come. Go you now merrily to your home. I too depart.

Sumati—Yes, villain ! Do that.

Lubdhak—A villain indeed ; but also a love-maddened swain,
Panting intensely for a nymph's love to gain,
If this earth can to nymph's birth at all give,
It must be you and you only, my lady-love !
So to get you in this life my highest avarice,
Success must be commensurate with practice.

(*Exit Lubdhak with a high motion*)

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV.

Hermitage of the saint "Maudgalya."

(*Enter Maudgalya, his son and disciples*)

Maudgalya—My dear son and disciples ! By the grace of the goddess "Gayatree", mother of the Vedas, I have, to the best of my knowledge and ability, explained to you the secret and sacred doctrines laid down in the Vedas. I have also tried to make you understand specially the mystic formula of worship to the supreme Divinity, which is the watch-word "Om"—a symbolic hymn pervading the Universe. By various sages in former ages has been sung the mystic symbol "Om" in different metres and rythmic sounds. That symbolic form of worship is the principal means

to the achievement of the knowledge of spirit as the cause and effect of the universe, and it has been admitted as such by all sages. The usage, however, is that Brahmins only have the birth-right to utter the sound "Om" in worship, and castes other than Brahmin are precluded from pronouncing it. The great sage Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa¹ felt a sympathy for all men irrespective of caste, creed, or sex. So for the good of all, he has explained the hidden meaning of "Om" to 'Suta,' one of his favourite disciples. In a conversation with Suta I came to know Sage Vyasa's explanation of the symbolic worship of "Om". The sacred "Gita" as you all know forms a part of the epic poem, the Mahabharata. In it God Sree Krishna is said to have told Arjuna—'Leaving aside all formalities of religious rites take *My Shelter.*' The exact secret meaning of this, as I have it from Suta, is to remember Sree Krishna in all our doings, to sing a song to Him glorifying His holy name and to place in our heart His image through deep meditation. In practising these three things regularly and repeatedly the true picture of the mystic sound "Om" as pervading the Universe

1. The writer of the Sanskrit Mahabharata.

will appear before our mind's eye when human hearts, burnt with the woes of the world, will get cooled. The great Sage desires to have the essence of that "Om" so sung as to be a spell to the glory of God's name to awake human beings from the slumber of earthly delusion. So I expect you all to receive, when your turn comes, as your disciples, men and women of any cast—be they Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Baisyas or Sudras—that is, not to make caste distinction in selection or reception of your disciples. Are you agreeable to this proposal ?

Son and disciples—At your kind disposal we all are, Dear Sir.

Maudgalya—Pleased ! Now I like to place on you some commission. Will you be able to perform ?

Son and disciples—Your orders may kindly be made known, Sir.

Maudgalya --By my esoteric power I see God Sree Krishna will visit Bhadrabati city of which the Vaisnav King Hansadhwaj is the reigning sovereign. That city is far off from here. Will you be able to go there before dusk to acquaint the king with this information ?

Do you think you will be able to reach there before evening ?

Son and disciples—To see God Sree Krishna we all are too eager.

Maudgalya—Only to say “eager” will not serve my purpose. I want so initiate the king spiritually. So I intend to send him through you some mystical formula. Whosoever among you are confident of your ability to master it at one hearing may come forward.

(His son and three disciples stepped forward)

Good, get it by heart then.

“Glory to ‘Gobinda’ !” Glory to ‘Gobinda’ !”

What a deep joy arises in thine name !

Charms and spells, the Vedas, the Vedanta

Can hardly vie with Thine sweet name.

Some say thine name has no form,

Others say it must have one,

When formless it sounds as “Om,”

And represents an image when in frame.

When one loses faculty,

Shastra’s teachings unsteady,

Then thine name a rock mighty,

Give us strength when evil time is come.

When bodily strength in decay,

Vedic rites who can obey,

Thine name then doth strength convey ;

Be it sung with reason our goal to gain.

Surname of Sree Krishna.

Hoarded sweets of youthful age,
 Lie in youth's gaudy plumage,
 Thine name the choicest beverage,
 Be it drunk merrily the world to brighten.
 Ye champions ! sing loud then
 "Sree Krishna" this holy name,
 In devotion-war Him challenge,
 Bringing under control all senses' game.

Maudgalya—This is a spell of song to the glory
 of His name. Recite from memory. (*Four
 boys in choir repeat*) Good.* Much pleased I'm.
 Here is also a spell as how to conceive His
 image:

"Dark-blue is His complexion as the cloudy sky,
 Centre of beauties that earth and sky can occupy,
 Soft face and four long arms lend a charming
 grace,
 A nose and eye-brows so good artists fail to
 trace,
 Two eyes are spacious like leaves of lotus flower,
 His teeth with swollen cheek like diamonds
 glitter,
 To add to the grace He has two ears regular,
 The conjoint feature looks gay as Nature's
 bower.
 Corners of His eyes are decked with cloud light,
 His two ear-rings look like pollens of lotus white,
 Two right hands hold a lotus and a discus-wheel,

O King! The secrets of success are reveal'd to
you,
Conceive this his image, observing Kshatra
Virtue."

Dear boys! Reproduce from memory. (*Boys
recite*) Highly pleased I am to see your good
memory. My kind wishes to all of you. Be
happy to Sree Krishna and come back safe.

Three disciples—Reverend father! Our obeisance
to you.

Son—Dear father! Accept my bow.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE V.

Bhadrabati Palace.

Prince Sudhanwa's Chamber.

(*Enter Sudhanwa and Pravabati*)

Sudhanwa—Princess ! Here is a piece of good
news. You will no doubt be very glad to hear.

Pravabati—What is it about, noble prince ?

Sudhanwa—Under our revered father's benign
rule all people live happy and content. Peasants
can now reap the harvest for which they labour
so much. Thieves and dacoits do not dare

ravage them nor do they attempt to rob innocent people and torture them for fear of heavy punishment. All households do now enjoy a sound sleep at night. In short, peace reigns over the kingdom as a result of the religious merit of the king. The king has become old. The minister advised him to abdicate the throne in my favour and enjoy rest. For my coronation arrangements will shortly be made. Surath does not like to be entangled in worldly life. He has made a *vow* to lead a bachelor's life to devote himself for the good of our country. It has been decided that after my enthronement he will be put to the command of the whole army. The king also desires to have him put to the office of minister when our old minister retires. He will have to do dual work. The king has already entrusted him with a share in the work of the government to help the minister. So Surath has no leisure to come over and hold a chit-chat with us here as before.

Pravabati—Is this so, ! I'll speak to mother-(in-law) and urge her to get brother-in-law married soon. He loves and respects me. I hope I can make him agree to a marriage proposal. I shall

tell him :—"Dear Brother ! I am in need of a merry mate for the day. When your wife comes I may get one. We both shall live together as sisters, shall play, talk and laugh as we like and you two brothers will run hither and thither with the weight of kingdom on your shoulders" (Laughter).

Sudhanwa—Good proposal ! But you don't express any views about my proposed coronation; nor do I find the usual flush in your face indicating gladness of heart.

Pravabati—A news of joy it is, no doubt. But the proposal to crown you as king during the king's life time put me to a surprise. My heart trembled within,—I know not why. The story of the Ramayana, appears before my mind's eye and makes me think how women are born to suffer:—

"Alas! Poor Sita, only daughter of King
Janak,

At Rama's coronation news in rupture broke,
But Providence—hard hit I'm to remember—
Ordain'd to her lot unspeakable woes to suffer.
She had to go on exile with Rama, her mate,
To fall in the hands of king Ravana wicked,

1. Husband's younger brother is addressed as "brother" in endearing term instead of brother-in-law.

While living in forest she was borne off by the
monster,
And kept confin'd in the Asoka wood in disaster.
An irony of fate,—to the ordained oppression
She was put by Ravana's women at thralldom,
With join'd hands and tearful eyes up at the star
Loud did she cry "Rama, my dear, where you
are!

As a chain'd elephant, goaded in an enclosure,
Trumpets with her trunk up deeper and deeper."

What I mean is this:—The king has undoubtedly become weary of government but so long he is alive, you two brothers stand behind a rock, you specially, being the eldest son. When full responsibility of the kingdom falls on your head, you will find little time to meet me in this chamber, not to speak of your waiting here long. Further, you will no longer be of this cheerful disposition. Being of the weaker sex, I do not understand things better than you. It strikes me however, to say:—"King" this noble word sounds very sweet to the ear; when seated on the throne surrounded by courtiers he looks very grand. But I fear if he can enjoy the pleasures of sound sleep—his heart is beset with so much cares and anxieties.—I must say we can pass our days merrily only so long as the weight

of kingdom does not fall on your head. My prayer to God—May the king live long in health and energy ! Your younger brother follows you in every step as Lakshman followed Rama; so the throne will undoubtedly be yours when the king leaves the world. I don't see any urgency for your being crowned king during the king's life time. My view is:—you two rather look to the welfare of the government, the one as a minister and the other a general in addition to the existing incumbents.

[*Enter Surath*] (Towards him)

Ah ! Just now I was talking with your elder about your marriage. You will have to bring in a wife to be my playmate. Forsooth !—you will have to keep my request. I would ask the queen to send a match-maker to settle it or must play his part myself, whichever you think better. Ah ! you smile away my words, but you must see your vow to lead a bachelor life broken by me, by hook or by crook.

Sudhanwa—Surath, my brother ! At this hour we did not expect you here. Is there any special news about our kingdom ? Your looks indicate some mental uneasiness !

Surath—Yes ; something serious. That's why

I am here, at such a late hour of the day. The Pandavas' sacrificial horse has been let loose to enter our kingdom in high pride. "If he is not sent back to them with our submission, Arjuna will invade our country with a vast army." The horse put our farmers to great trouble causing serious damage to the crops. A very swift horse and richly harnessed, so the farmers were afraid to beat or catch him. Our head watchman brought me this information. With his help I caught the horse and sent him to the king's court. I am come to take you with me. Let us go and see what decision is arrived at as to the disposal of the horse by the king and the courtiers.

Pravabati—Ah, my ill luck! The evil apprehended is about to come to pass. Heaven save us from the danger. My request to you both is that the king be advised to send back the horse to the owner. No need for a contest.

Sudhanwa—For the test of knowledge of arms so
hard-earned

A golden opportunity seems to come to hand,
Is there a warrior who should n't be happy
To avail himself of this opportunity !
Tell me, Surath, your views in the matter.

Surath—I fully agree with you, dear elder !
Is it that the Pandavas have formed the idea,
There are no more warriors in India !
Or the victory at Kurukshetra made them brag,
Think whole India as “beat” to bend low as a
dog.

Let us see how much prowess Arjuna keeps,
We must chastise him with drums and bag-pipes.

But we should n't delay further. Let us be
quick to present ourselves before the court.

Sudhanwa—Very well! Should we not inform
mother?

Surath—Not now, brother! But after the king's
decision. Mother, I suppose, has left her cham-
ber by this time and gone to the temple of Nri-
singha for the presentation of usual wave-offer-
ing.

Pravabati—Dear princes ! My sincere request
to you both—Try your best to avoid a contest—
It will not be possible to defeat Arjuna in a
battle. A number of great heroes have lost
their lives at his hands. Your words of excite-
ment put me to deep despair. Unable I'm to
compose my mind. My brain begins to swim.
My heart trembles. I am seeing all dark.

Sudhanwa—I see, Prava, a thought of distress of
Janak's daughter,

Is putting you to mind's timid stupor.

A Kshatriya wife you, a Kshatriya's daughter,
Shun cowardice that common women feel ever.

Just think o'er the character of the giant wife,
The heroic Pramila, when blowing her fife,
With her company of women and sword in hand,
With a view to see Meghnad,¹ her dear husband,
Dressed like Chamunda,² maddened by war,
The city of Lanka³ she wanted to enter,
Which was besieg'd by troops of monkey and
bear.

God Rama himself was surpris'd to see her
valour.

He ordered his troops to remove the blockade
And give her at once a passage to meet her mate.
When in a fight with Lakshmana mighty
Meghnad fell,

She mounted his funeral pyre, blowing conch-
shell.

Victory or defeat is the decree of fate,
If I part with my life in an open contest.

The death of a true Kshatriya I shall merit,
To the realm of heaven will then go my spirit.

1. Ravana's most warlike son.

2. Goddess Kali is pictured as fighting against demons with sacrificial sword in hand, dishevelled her long hair, throwing off all cover of body and putting on her neck a wreath of human skulls, very ghastly to look at.

3. Monster King Ravana's country (Ceylon)

If not afraid of death, make bold with me to
Mount my pyre, following the long-standing custom.

None'll then suffer the pain of separation,
We both shall live happy in that immortal
region.

Pravabati ! Why in such a weakness of mind then !

**A hero's wife you, such a dole doesn't you
become.**

Pravabati—Oh my Love ! I know all, but my mind I cannot console. It is so decided that there should be a battle, unlucky I'm—My last request to you—I may once see you before you rush to battle ! Please try to keep my request, dear prince !

Sudhanwa—I must try, if time permits.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE VI.

**Camp of the Pandavas
Outside Bhadrabati City.**

(Enter Arjuna as seated, other leaders stand round Arjuna)

**Arjuna—Sagacious Satyaki ! I ask your opinion,
I've failed to act up to our King's instruction.**

When leaving home to guard the sacrificial
horse,

Good King Yudhisthira spoke in a voice of
remorse,

"If for the horse's sake there be a contention,
In the conflict that might follow I should kill
none ;

Hostile kings should only be brought to
subjection."

But Prabir, Niladhaj's son, did not like
submission,

Though young, fought he as a veteran true and
brave,

And threw down his life to seek a glorious grave.
Sore I am at heart for this unhappy event.

The horse has enter'd Bhadrabati, at present.

What will happen here I cannot well surmise.

Both king and queen are known as Vaisnava
precise.

So I conceive they will send back the horse
next morn

And with King Yudhisthira will make a
coalition.

Satyaki—Four strong fortresses are the city's
girth,

The king has two warlike sons, Sudhanwa,
Surath.

My conviction—from morn will begin a battle,
To get back the horse without a fight seems
doubtful.

So my suggestion—if to you acceptable—
To block the fort-gates, from eve is desirable.

Arjuna—My intrepid generals, worthy of credit,
Advise me please, what you've to say about it.

Kritabarma—I would put the whole city under
blockade.

Others leaders—Noble Śatyaki's suggestion we
all accept.

Arjuna—Let our vast army be then at once on
the move

To shut the gates of the forts just before eve.

Be it divided into battalions four,

With two generals o'er each, facing each high
door.

With Brishaketu I'll remain at the north gate,

Let Satyaki and Subeg block the east gate,

At the south gate to stand Pradumna and

Jubanaswa,

The west gate be shut by Kritabarma and

Anusalwa,

The battle array should be made in horse-shoe
form,
To baffle King's two sons' combined opposition.

(*Aside*)

Oh! How ruthless is the life of a Kshatriya !
From him virtue and kindness fly far away,
A war—human slaughter—is his life's domain,
As in search of prey a fierce beast leaves the den.
In battles I have a number of kinsmen slain.
My hands are not still free from spilling bloods
of men !

Oh! How severe is this discipline of fate !
Thine will is law, O' God! Who can it avoid !

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE VII.

City of Bhadrabati—King's Court.

(*Enter Hansadhwaj, Minister, Priest Sankha and
courtiers as seated in their respective seats.*)

[*Four hermit boys appear dancing and singing the
song "Glory to Govinda" as in pages 34-35*]

Hermit boys—"Glory to the king, Glory to the
king."

Hansadhwaj—Dear hermit boys ! Accept my
bow. Whence do you come? By whom have

you been taught to sing so sweet a song? I shall be glad if the object of your visit is made known.

Three hermit boys—Good King! We are disciples of Rishi Maudgalya and he (pointing out the fourth boy) is his son. With the aid of his knowledge in various Shastras the great sage has come to know that Sree Krishna will pay a visit to this kingdom to-morrow. We have been sent here to give you this information. To initiate you spiritually, the sage has also sent through us a charm and spell as how to conceive the image of God Sree Krishna before you see him with naked eyes.

[Boys recite—"Dark-blue is his complexion etc." as in pages 34-35.]

Hansadhwaj—It is the saints' great compassion on me. Tender my obeisance to him. Please oblige me by accepting my hospitality and stay here for the night. Guard! accompany these hermit boys to the temple of Nrisingha where you will find my Queen-Consort. In my name ask her to make all comfortable arrangements for board and lodge of these hermit boys.

Hermit boys—"Hurra to the King, Huzza to

the King."

(*Exit hermit boys and guard.*)

(*Re-enters guard.*)

Guard—Bow to the King! Our princes are at the gate with a horse in charge of a watchman.

Hansadhwaj—Bring the princes here with due respect.

(*Exit guard.*)

[Enter Sudhanwa and Surath and take their seats at the right and left sides of the king respectively after bowing to the Priest. Watchman stands in the hall with the horse.]

(Surath whispers into the ears of the king)

Behold, my wise minister and courtiers all,
The Pandava's horse for sacrifice at the hall.
Carries he on head, when entering our city,
The boastful inscription, as you all would see—
Unless he is sent after three days of entry
Back to Pandava's camp, the whole of our
country

Will be invaded by Arjuna the resistless."
Advice me, if peace or fight befits the case.

Minister—Pandavas' approach ere Sree Krishna's advent

The fact O King ! to be sure does ill portend.

Intelligence has reached me from spy's source,
 The Pandavas' and the Yadavas' combined force
 Have surrounded the gates of our forts four,
 Commanded by leaders, eight at least, if not more.
 Brishaketu, Kritabarma, Pradumna, Satyaki
 And other leaders whose names not given to me.
 The supreme in command, Arjuna-Kiriti.
 At this critical moment my advice should be:—
 A handful of our Bhadrabati soldiers
 Will not be able to defend the barriers,
 Against the Pandava-Yadava combined host ;
 God Sree Krishna is over the Pandavas' post.
 If with the Pandavas you make an alliance,
 Narayana may be pleased with you, perchance,
 Whom you have been adoring all along, O King
 To save loss of men and all sides, this my
scheme.

Courtiers—At this juncture minister's advice
 seems to be sound.

Hansadhwaj—But to a renegade's call Narayana
doesn't respond.

A Kshatriya's chief virtue is to pursue war,
 I've two archer sons the blockade to clear ;
 If the horse be sent back without an encounter,
 All kings on earth and Sree Krishna himself
will sneer.

(*Aside*)

My long-cherished hope to see

“Nara-Narayana”¹,

Will never be fulfilled and for ever be gone.

(*Openly*)

Think over again, all my counsellors' good,
Ready for a battle the Pandavas have stood,
Enough time there was before the dawning of
the day,

They shouldn't have put their troops in battle
array.

So fight we must, whatever to our lot may befall,
The horse sha'n't be sent back but kept in our
stall.

I understand, my brave sons, you keep lion's
strength—

The Queen told me so—you received your birth
Through the grace of our old family god,
Nrisingha,

—A god of human frame but with lion's face
and paw.

Open the gates of the forts as soon as it is dawn,
Take the field with all the prowess of a lion
And bring Krishna and Arjuna in shackles
bound.

I won't have any of my subjects to be ground
Under the load of oppression of hostile party ;
Myself with sword in hand will defend my city,

So long as there exists life in my body.
Pick out from my arsenal war-implements
—Bows, arrows, swords and other weapons as ^{mighty,}
you like.—
Cheer up our soldiers to take up their pike.
Let the drums and trumpets be beat with
thunder's roar,
With the clash of sharp arms to shed enemy's
gore,
Let these high sounds terrorise the hearts of our
foe.
Minister! Let my proclamation run as below:—
Bhadrabati soldiers with arms to equip soon
And before dawn muster at the fort-compound ;
Who will arrive late shall receive punishment
condign,
Shall lose his life in oil-pan on fire burning.

Minister—On my head the royal command I take.
But—

Hansadhwaj—But ! What do you mean ? Have
you anything to say ?

Minister—If a minister, O King ! must say his
say :—

Severe appears to me the royal command.
If owing to night-keeping any commandant
Fails to present him at the fort-compound by
dawn,

Should he die an ignominious death so sudden ?
There will be more loss of life to serve no

purpose,

Our loss of strength will encourage the foe to
rush.

Ordain some other punishment, O good King !
Reconsider your such a drastic bidding.

Hansadhwaj—My orders must prevail. If a
son of mine fails,
He, too, shall die this death, not to speak of
of anyone else.

[*Exit Sudhanwa, Surath, Minister, all
courtiers and Sankha.*]

Kotal ! Keep the horse tied with a strong rope,
Take care that to run away it gets no scope.
Know for certain, you are to lose your head,
If the steed not produced at dawn, with excuse
as "fled."

(*Aside*)

Through the cause of horse we shall see
Hrishikesh,¹
The pain of repeated births won't burn us afresh.

Kotal —I take the orders of the king of kings on
my head with respectful bow.

(*Exit King and Kotal.*)

SCENE VIII.

Cottage of Kotal and adjoining yard full of
trees, shrubs and creepers.

Kotal— (*Speaking to himself*)

The horse came running from a place unknown,
To keep it chain'd here king's direction,
Or, forsooth, I'm to suffer destruction.
To accept service is no doubt a short-coming,
A watchman's specially, thoughtless dealing.
But what should I do to pacify my hunger?
I haven't the workman's skill nor the trick of a
beggar !

Hari! Hari! It must be Sree Hari's favour.
Be it what it may, night's about to pass away,
Let me tie the horse and see if wife's out of her
way.

(*Keeping the horse tied to a tree knocks at the door*)

Whoop! Whoop! Fast asleep ? By one or two ?

Kotalini—A knock at the door, so late in the
night ! Who you? Who?

(*Enter Kotalini opening the cottage door*)

There's night yet, high time to morn,
Aha! Dear you here to make a fun !
Perhaps you keep a grave suspicion,
Whether I'm alone or with a bed companion.

It might have been a thing, when young,
That moon-time gone the west horizon,
Now at night at every low sound
I unlatch the door but none is found,
Youthful age when passed over,
An aged woman who cares for !

Kotal—Just so, just so; but know, my dear,
A worm-eaten brinjal has a blind buyer.

Kotalini—What! Lived we so long, together,
Man, to-day a blind woman you take me for!
Which part of my body as blind you consider ?
I see you've lost your eye-sight altogether.

Kotal—Better we should now drop the matter.
Now hear me, my woman dear !
Pandavas' horse our kingdom runs o'er.
From the king there's a strict order—
In his hand a pike who'er won't bear,
At dawn in the fort-compound not appear,
Will be made a cake fried with butter:
There's a huge oil-pan on the fire.

Kotalini—A horse—a hot oil-pan !
I'm at my wit's end, I can't scan.

Kotal—Ah! At me why do you stare agape?

Look there. In the yard stands a horse tied to a tree. A winged steed, don't you see? On its back will ride our king and queen next morning. They will go to see Hrishikesh¹ and hope to reach heaven at once in flesh and blood. I wish to have a trial by placing you on the horse's back in my front to see if I could get to heaven or not. It is night yet, let us ride and see what is got.

Kotalini—I can't mount on a stallion or on a mule.

Kotal—(Catching hold of Kotalini's arm). Let us try once. I'm in earnest. It is no joke.

Kotalini—What sort of childish talk it is ! Let go my hand, don't tease. A daughter I'm of a common household. How can I make so bold? If my father or uncle had been a king, I could have been taught how to dance and sing. In the long run I could become a cavalry queen to suit a decrepit king, greater than yourself. But you, too, have been born of parents of no higher status. Amazed I am to see you cherish a fun so perverse. Now leave my hand. See you all the fun of this old vagabond !

1. A celebrated place of Hindu pilgrimage of very old date on the Himalaya Mountains.

Kotal—Blonde ! Leave aside all your taunting.
 In haste I shall fall in the morning.
 Bring me boiled rice full-pot
 To eat and feed my moustache fat.
 Then ~~may~~ ^{shall} I see who the brother-in-law to
 confront !

Kotalini—Pooh ! Your every thing of queer shunt.

Kotal—Stop stirring your hands and nose-ring.

Kotalini—Go to the dogs, you unscrupulous being.

(*Dual song*) . .

Kotalini—Hands' and nose-ring's stirring doesn't please you
 now, I see.

You know not handling cooking-pots what a jostling it be.
 Towards the grave you are paged,
 At a slight cause you are enraged,
 When my body was round-ranged,
 You were never found to be so very noisy.

Kotal— Taking a pitcher on your waist,
 Why you walk daily from east to west,
 To me your motive is known best,
 Leave aside, leave aside all your coquetry.

Kotalini— I may be a typical coquette,
 Don't think you are a child yet,
 In and out-doors you have set
 The name of a gallant's efficacy.

Kotal— Aha ! It has been ruled by God,
 As the cover is, so the pot.
 Any thing said your face turns a pot,
 This distortion I can't help laughing to see.

[*Exit Kotal and Kotalini*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.



Bhadrabati Palace—Queen's Chamber.

(*Enter Queen and Kubalaya*)

Queen—Night has almost pass'd her minutes,
I haven't a nap,
I feel an unrest, as if it forebodes some mishap,
Kubalaya! Let us go to Nrisingha temple soon.

(*A beat of drums*)

Why, there is a beating of drums, what's the
reason.

(*Enter Pravabati*)

Pravabati—Mother! Have you no previous
information ?

To this kingdom Pandava's horse for sacrifice
is come.

From eve, King, Courtiers and your sons two
Have sat them a deep consultation to go
through.

By the beat of drums, as far as I can surmise,
For the horse's cause a battle is decided at sun-
rise

This the reason why there's a beating of drum.
To-night your eldest son to his room hasn't come ;

Thinking he may be here to take dusts of your
feet,
I'm coming to your chamber with him to meet.
(Whispers to Kubalaya's ears)

(Enter Sudhanwa and Surath in war-dress)

Surath—We two brothers are come, mother,
your blessing to take,
We've king's orders with the Pandavas a war to
make,
Give us dusts of your feet, before day-break
we'll be gone;
Hear also, mother, how king's orders to all
soldiers run,
"Who'll fail to reach the fort-compound by dawn
Will be burnt alive in hot oil-pan and no pardon."

Queen—A mother's blessings on her child, at
heart, e'er abide.
But sinuous motion of time oft makes them slide.
You have king's orders how can I them override!
Both of you, to any fate must hasten to fight.
My good wish—"Be victorious"—"Win the
battle".
But in a fight with Krishna-Arjuna, how possible!
Has the king lost his brains ? Doesn't he see
the evils !
For a trifle horse, going to lose two eyes' pupils!

Kubalaya! Let us both go to the king's court,
Shedding tears of eyes—woman's last resort—
To make an effort on the king to impress
Our reasons to stop the fight bringing in distress.
Come along with me, Surath! to the king's court,
Sudhanwa! meet Bau-Ma' and follow me short.
Let me see if I can have the decision set aside,
Or we must be drifting along with the tide.

(*Exit Queen, Kubalaya and Surath*)

Pravabati—Noble prince! I throw down myself
at your feet.

Be pleased to put off your martial outfit,
Come inside the chamber and rest a while,
I like a few moments with you to beguile.

Sudhanwa—You have heard all that was told
mother.
Night is almost over, the sun will rise shortly
after.

If delayed here I shall fall in a great peril,
Shall meet untimely death, with unsated war-zeal.

Pravabati—Nature's law advances the cause of
espousal,
Show me the love, leave me not in a state dismal.

Sudhanwa—At the fort-gates foemen stand with
tremendous growl,

Before driving them off, how in a play-ground
can I bowl ?

A heroine you, such untimely words fit you not,
Hark the bugle's rapid blow, the drum's beats
hot.

They say "Bhadrabati soldiers, wake, your arms
take up."

Chief Commandant I'm, how war-dress can I
put off !

To heed a lady's cause if I now proceed,
Unto me what will say all the Kshatriya breed !
Princess! Of the royal family you are an honour,
At dawn to our family god due rites offer.
After I am come, beating our enemy down,
I must try to please you any time, eve or morn.

Pravabati—Hear I now and then from every body,
In three worlds there's not a warrior steady
Who dares challenge Krishna-Arjuna in war ;
So a hope to victory my heart cannot foster.
My ill luck ! A battle unexpected comes about.
To the Almighty this my prayer devout,
My hearty thousand bows to god Nrisingha's
feet,
"Come home safe with the news of opponents'
defeat";
But as Pravabati feels the craving for a son,

She wants to hold with her mate some
collocution.

Sudhanwa—(*Aside*)

A lady's martial cloak is the flowers wreath,
A side-glance is her weapon with sharpen'd teeth,
Her war-bugle is the sweet cuckoo's distant song.
If the south wind upon the hour blows along,
Wher's the champion to avoid the tension !

(*Openly*) .

I see now, cupid recks not time nor place.

Pravabati—Generation, O warrior, the Shastra
dictates.

(*Sings Pravabati*)

A woman's shy virtue for a child to bear
Made me keep far from you for the few days last.
A good day is come, the evil one is not too far,
By leaving me now, your man-virtue will be lost.
 Seeing you now in a battle dress,
 Fallen I've in a severe distress,
 I find no words how myself to express,
In knowledge of all Shastras you are well-vers'd,
 Through my ill-luck if you fall in battle,
 How shall I solace my mind so fickle !
 Hope, with my grief o'er you to grapple,
If I could see the moon-like face of a son abreast
 To fight with a foe is a hero's fame,
 To coalesce with her mate a Sati's game.
 To beget issue Shastras enjoin,
Hell for childless men may be saved at last.

[*Exit Sudhanwa and Pravabati*]

SCENE II.

Bhadrabati Fort-Compound.

(*Enter Hansadhwaj, Minister, Courtiers, Priest Sankha
as seated and soldiers standing*)

[*Enter Queen, Kubalaya and Surath.*]

Queen—Queen enters the king's court without his
permission,
Good monarch ! Be pleased to pardon her
intrusion.
To stop this fatal fight and hear her submission,
To see Krishna-Arjuna, I know you have
intention,
Incarnated gods they are, not men common,
Knot them with love, do not bereave me of my
son.

Hansadhwaj—Why here, O' Queen, to add to my
confusion,
Shedding tears of eyes ! To inner room be gone.
At battle's approach a Kshatriya's heart
Becomes harder than a thunder bolt to avert
The cries of babies and the wailings of women.
Battle is Kshatriya's foremost religion.
To one who his own religion goes to forsake
Narayana ne'er pays visit though he beg.
Two' archer sons I have to fight in chariot,
—Dear Sudhanwa and dear Surath.—
Not weak I'm, why the Pandavas should I fear !

But why do I not find Sudhanwá here !

• Where is he ? What fails him king's orders
• to keep ?
Or forgetful, in bed he enjoys a sound sleep ?

[*Enter Sudhanwa.*]

• You a son, disgrace to our family, why so late ?
Don't you know in hot oil-pan lies your fate ?

Sudhanwa—Royal command be put into
• execution.

Mother, I suppose, might know what did
• happen.

• When coming, fell to my feet her daughter-
in-law,
To avoid her I could hardly find a flaw.

Hansadhwaj—Queen ! Such a coward son in
your womb you bore ?
On the eve of battle, love to a womankind,
so sore !

Queen—On the prince throw not this vain
• accusation.

It was not self-interest that moved him on.
To keep a lady's honour is a hero's deed,
Not the act of a base coward to serve his need.
'Ask your family priest at this moment,
Whether to this my version he can assent:—

"For the manes to get an oblation of water,
The sages even a married-life¹ enter."

Sankha—O' Noble king ! Why⁶ are you keeping
" silent ?

If for the sake of wife and son, you dissent
From the path of virtue and break your promise,
In three worlds your dark infamy will arise;
After death, you will have to suffer perdition,
But do as you like, I've no express prevention.
I must relinquish at once my priesthood here,
Will go to another kingdom to serve king
another.

" [*Exit Sankha*]

Hansadhwaj—Why, O' Queen, should you be
shedding tears in vain !
What is ordained by God is sure to happen.
Go back, please, to your inner chamber.
Pátra² ! Throw Sudhanwa sharp in oil-pan
on fire.
I proceed to call back my priest who left us in
in anger.

[*Exit Hansadhwaj*]

1. According to Hindu Śāstras the object of marriage is to beget a son who will perform Śradha ceremony of father and forefathers to make them enjoy peace and happiness in the next world.

2. One of the courtiers who is to carry out king's orders about capital punishment on criminals.

Queen—Dear me ! What a calamity has ~~lowered~~
Ill-fated Pravábatí! Come and see our ~~hazard~~.
King did not grant my Sudhanwa any pardon,
A father became an enemy of his own son!
With Sudhanwa I too must jump in the oil-pan.
(Runs towards the oil-pan on fire)

Kubalaya—*(Catching hold of the Queen's arm)*
Mother! You are not unwise. • The decision is
crude.
But don't be so impatient nor in a pensive mood.
An evil unforeseen is come to our front,
With cool determination we may it surmount.
Father warned you not to remain here;
I too advise you to keep yourself far.
Her dear son is to die an untimely death,
How a mother can bear the sight, keep her
breath!
Wipe away tears of eyes, to inner room be gone,
Pray to good god Nrisingha to gain his boon.
I come of your sacred body, my dear mother,
And Sudhanwa is my most affectionate brother;
Mother! Give me dust of feet for my energy,
I take on myself the task of Sudhanwa's safety.

Queen—Run I—flee away—from this horrible
sight,
I must sacrifice my life at god Nrisingha's feet.
[Exit Queen]

Kubalaya—Sudhanwa ! My brother, my brother
 dear!

Fear not the pan of hot oil on blazing fire.
 Prahlád thrown on fire sought whose feet for
 shelter,

That "Hari" as lying on a vast sheet of water,
 Conceive that image with undivided attention,
 The fire will then lose its burning function;
 The hot oil will surely become cool, I say,
 I give you a spell of safety driving your dismay.
 Say, dear brother, say:—

'Harey Krishna', 'Harey Krishna'

'Krishna', 'Krishna', 'Harey', 'Harey'.

'Harey Rama', 'Harey Rama'

'Rama', 'Rama', 'Harey', 'Harey'.

Say, brother, also say:—

'Harey Murarey', 'Madhukaitavarey'

'Gopala', 'Govinda', 'Mukunda', 'Sourey'.

Sudhanwa—(*Repeats the spell*).

Kubalaya—O' Venerable Minister and Courtiers!
 King absent, so I pray for your orders
 To have his orders about Sudhanwa's death
 Executed by myself with Surath's aid.

*All these utterances of Sree Krishna's surnames are believed to save us from all sorts of dangers and difficulties, if with heart and soul we practise them throughout our life and ultimately our soul will reach sublimity in the next world.

(*Vaisnava doctrines.*)

Minister and Courtiers—

Patra! Don't touch Sudhanwa's pious body.
Mother¹ Kubalaya! We feel it our duty
To place Sudhanwa in your protecting hand;
We hope, through him glory of "Krishna" name
will expand.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE III.

Priest Sankha's Cottage.

[*Enter Sankha and Bráhmīni*]

Brahmini—You have returned to-day too early
from the king's palace, I see, and just after re-
turn engaged yourself in hunting up Shastras
and why?

Sankha—Yes, Yes.

Brahmini—'Yes!' What do you mean? Tell me,
please, what has happened there. I hear our
king is in danger. The Pandavas have come to
conquer his kingdom. Is it true?

Sankha—Yes. Mind your own business. Don't
bother.

1. Respectful and endearing term for addressing women and girls.

Brahmini—Perhaps to pacify the angry looks of evil planets you are consulting *Shastras* and *Mantras*?

Sankha—What I told you and what you heard! I asked you not to put me into confusion with your silly questions now. Do you understand?

Brahmini—Not perfectly. I think you have been vanquished in arguments by some Pandit in the king's court. So your face has a bit of sullen look!

Sankha—Ah! Great botheration there!

Brahmini—Always in hot temper! At every word of mine you quiver in anger. Can't I ask you a question ever?

Sankha—Ay-nay. No-never. You are the victor. Perhaps now you understand things better.

Brahmini—I think I could! But I'm the victor! How is it? I am at home here.

Sankha—I'm vanquished before the weaker sex. Perhaps now you are glad at heart?

Brahmini—At the king's court! Before a woman! Why should a woman come to the king's court at all? I can't follow you. Now please tell me the fact.

Sankha—This the thing exact. 'On the part of a king to keep his promise' or 'To break it to keep a woman's honour,' of the two things which is the greater virtue? This sort of question was put by our Queen. Is it possible to answer the question then and there? I could not keep my temper and at last I am here and looking through the Shastras as I do ever. Now you understand the position.

Brahmini—Oh! Such a big question! For this, your head's so much perplexion. Now take a note to dictation, please, :—"For the growth of progeny you (men) bring us (women) to your own house and begin a home life. You say that the path of a domestic life is superior to all other ways of religion. If this is so, *men to look to our cause* seems to be their foremost duty in domestication." The question is solved now. So, please, return to the king's palace, give your precepts to the Queen. Ask her at the same time to arrange for necessary articles—good fruits, good rice, good cloths—to offer a worship

to the evil stars standing against the king and so to propitiate their evil look.

They say:—

“He who wishes to do good and holds a feast
Is rightly termed the family priest.”

If you are always in an irritative mood,
How can you expect to keep your priesthood? .

Sankha—Ah! All my thoughts are thrown into
“ ” confusion.

Stop, please; let me think out a solution.

(Turning pages of the Ramayana)

(Aside)

Time runs a crooked course—The world's
second stage and this the world's third stage—
In the former age king Dasharatha of Oudh to
keep his promise sent his dear son Rama
Chandra to an exile for fourteen years while in
this age our good king like Hansadhvaj—

(Enter Hansadhvaj)

Hansadhvaj—(As if he overheard)

Yes, Brahmin, this hard-hearted Hansadhvaj—
O' Pious Brahmin! Please come and see with
your own eyes—to keep his promise—O' Stanch
Brahmin! Come with me and see the sight—
has ordered his son, dearer than his own life, to
be thrown into the pan of hot-oil on fire.

(Strikes his breast) King Dasharatha died of of grief for his son but this wretched Hansa-dhwaj is still alive.

Sankha—Well done! Well done! Glory to the truthful king. Shashtra's honour should be kept before every thing.

Brahmini—Alas! Alas! What a cruel and sinful thing!

To take his own son's life a father's proceeding!
 Brahmin! Whence such a Shashtra do you bring?
 I must put on fire your Shashtra and its saying.

(Snatches the book from Sankha's hands)
 (Exeunt)

SCENE IV.

Fort-compound—Pan of hot oil on blazing fire.

(Enter Sudhanwa, Surath, Kubalaya, Minister and Courtiers.

Sudhanwa—Surath! My brother! O' Surath dear!

I'm not so fated as to fulfil father's desire.
 I hoped to defeat Arjunā in an open fight,
 Bring him with his charioteer Krishna tied tight.

But God Almighty willed it to be otherwise.
I couldn't get time to fight—what a surprise—
A pity too, that brother united with brother
For our mother-land could not combat ever.
Two flowers we were, as if on one foot-stalk;
Pravabati as an abrupt tempest gave a shock
Me to fall down unexpectedly from the petiole.
Now you are left alone to try your mettle.
Ah! Quite unlucky she is—a poor creature—
See, that no one wounds her feelings with a jeer.
If father's wrath away, he grieves me over.
Console him with suitable words, kind and
tender.

If mother any time stirs her life to give up,
The grief for my premature death to forget
sharp,

Alleviate the severity of her affliction
By catching hold of her feet ever and anon.
Time is come. Adieu! Adieu!

Surath—Brother! Alone to die?

Kubalaya—As if in accents low there's a reply:—
“No fear, no fear, I am nigh, I am nigh.”

(Aside)

Here in front is the boiling oil-pan fuming over
a blazing pyre. The Name or Game of Sree
Krishna will cool it down if uttered with
mind and soul.

(*Openly*)

When a baby you stole butter for your toy
And made all milk-maids cry and laugh in alloy.
When in age below fifteen, you stood in three

bends of frame

To lure away from home milk-women—damsel
and dame—

While sporting in water maidens nude and fair,
You stole their cloths to see their posture and
gesture.

When danced you on Kaliya's¹ head in Jumna
water,
His wives, all venomous snakes, wept bitter in
fear.

When Jupiter god began to deluge Brindaban
By the down-pour of heavy shower of rain,
You held up rock 'Gobardhan' as an 'umbrella
For the protection of women, children and cattle.
Again to keep concealed your secret love
From the eyes of the public, in the grove,
To keep honour of Radha², you being a male

1. The biggest and most venomous serpent who poisoned Jumna water to such an extent that whoever touched it met with instantaneous death. Sree Krishna diving in the water stood on his head and made him leave the Jumna.
2. Allegation was made against Sree Krishna that he lured away 'Radha' Ayan milk-man's wife. To remove this allegation He turned Himself to goddess "Kali" and displayed His divine power. But the "Bhagabata" does not speak clearly of the existence of a milk-woman of the name of "Radha".

Turned yourself at once to a matchless female.
 Sports with milk-maids, your life's game at
Brindaban
 Having in the above way brought to completion,
 You started for Mathura, there to reign over
 And with Kubja¹ to begin your play former.
 Thence at Dwarka to float your big boat of
fame,
 To make it a town the sea-coast you did reclaim.
 I hear you reside and reign now in that new
city
 With sixteen thousand queens of exquisite beauty.
 Unable to break the fast of Durbasa² saint
 When Draupadi cried and was almost faint,
 You saved her from the saint's intended harm
 By filling his empty stomach with air warm.

1. A lady with humped-up back.

2. Dhritarastra and Pandu were two brothers of the Kuru dynasty. Sons of the former were called "Kauravas" and those of the latter Pandavas. The Kauravas were jealous of the Pandavas and deprived them of their share of kingdom by tricks in dice play. While the Pandavas were living in exile in a forest, Duryadhan, the eldest Kauravas intending further harm sent this wrathful saint Durbasha with thousands of followers as guests to the Pandavas who were turned beggars. The saint with all his followers visited the Pandavas' cottage and asked Draupadi, wife of the five Pandavas to feed him and his company. Duryadhan's scheme was that if the Pandavas failed, the saint would burn them to ashes by his curse. Draupadi prayed to Sree Krishna to save the situation. Sree Krishna did that miracle and Duryadhan's wicked purpose was frustrated,

You are uprooting the Kshatriya clans, you
 alone,
 But as Pandavas' friend all the world looks you
 upon.
 Forgive my sins, snatch the burning power of
 fire,
 Save Sudhanwa's life, in Your name my hope
 entire.
 O' Sree Krishna! Grant this my prayer sincere.

*(Sits in meditation to God Sree Krishna with her eyes shut
 and with a rosary in hand)*

(Sudhanwa's prayer by a song)

O' Allayer of Death-fear ! An untimely grave I enter.
 In the last moment of life you are to all the brightest gem ever.
 O' Sree Krishna ! Where you are ? A corpse shall I be shortly
 after,
 My life's play ends here, do visit this poor creature.
 Night of a full moon became that of a new moon.
 Blue sky laughed a laugh of lightning sudden,
 Come soon, O' Dark-moon ! Get yourself seated in my heart's
 centre.

In my heart's corner I hide the keen desire,
 Armed with sword, bow, arrows in quiver,
 To crush the foe altogether, and lie down as a warrior

(Throws himself in oil pan uttering)

'Harey Krishna' 'Harey Krishna'
 'Krishna' 'Krishna' 'Harey' 'Harey'
 'Harey Rama' 'Harey Rama'
 'Rama' 'Rama' 'Harey' 'Harey'.

should have been. Bring me a cocoanut and let me examine.

(A cocoanut is brought by one of the courtiers and thrown into the pan by Sankha. It burst out to burn Sankha's hands.)

Oh ! It must have been Vishnu's wonderful power that preserved Sudhanwa's life. Being proud of a Brahmin's pride proceeded I to uphold the cause of burning a Vaisnava alive ! Surely I have committed a sin too great. I must wash it out.

(Catching hold of Sudhanwa's arm and lifting him up)

"Come up, come up, O' Righteous Sudhanwa !
'A Vaisnava you are, not in name but in action ;
Be pleased to forgive this poor Brahmin's guilt,
In your place I throw myself to be killed"

(Jumps into the oil pan)

Hansadhwaj—What do you all look at, standing
as idols wooden ?

Raise up, raise up our Brahmin priest soon.
Save me from the sin of being the cause of death
to Brahmin,
Put out, put out the fire at once and break
the oil pan.

(The priest is raised up)

Sankha—O King ! A godly virtue you really
possess ;

So, you are gifted with a son so virtuous.
Sudhanwa will defeat the Pandava host alone,
This Brahmin's words will not go in vain.

Kubalaya—Brother Sudhanwa ! Brahmin words^a
a surety,

To win victory, there'll be no difficulty.
Let me now go to tell mother all the fact,
Through you, with Sree Krishna we may come
into contact.

[*Exit Kubalaya*]

Hansadhwaj—To the command of my whole
force, princes, I put you both,
You should be careful when the battle rages
forth.

Too complex is the Pandava's dexterity in war,
Mechanic of Time's vortex their war-minister,
Through whose shrewd diplomacy and
stratagem

All Kaurava generals lost the battle's game.
But we need no recourse to wile or artifice,
The good name of our forefathers so to tarnish.
By the force of arms let the victory be won,

I. Sree Krishna is meant as He is the creator of time.

Bring here in shackle Arjuna and Sree Krishna.
To our joy, with Queen I want to see them.

[*Exit all except Sudhanwa and Surath*]

Sudhanwa—There, brother Surath, behold, behold
How the enemy beseiges our each stronghold.
Four divisions comprise the battle array,
—Elephants, war-chariots, foot and cavalry.—
I'll begin the attack, opening the north gate-way,
As father's back within the forts you are to stay,
Until you find me to cross west-gate from outside,
The foe, if they come to know none of us is inside,
Will make all possible endeavour to storm
the fort,
Old king alone won't be able to stand their
effort.

Surath—Veteran generals numbering eight or
more.

Lead the army split up in divisions four.
If coming round they make a combined attack,
Who will be there to defend your back ?

Sudhanwa—Likely there will not be a battle so
unjust.
If I find just so, I'll despatch a news fast.
The victory will then be attained very easily.
You will lead out the whole garrison very
quickly,

Make a surprised onset on the foe from behind
And kill each and every one whom you will find.
A craft is oft needed to deal with the crafty,
The simple should be treated with simplicity.

Surath—Suppose, in time me the news did not
reach.

Sudhanwa—Filths and dirts will then fill in the
breach.

(Exit Sudhanwa, Surath)

" (Exeunt)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Battle-field—Battle at the north gate.

(Enter Brisaketu and Arjuna behind him and soldiers)

(Sudhanwa appears)

Sudhanwa—Warrior ! Your name and rank in the
army?

Who your tutor of arms that you hope to be
palmy

In a battle in this our Bhadrabati city,
Taking up Pandavas' side for the horse's safety?
Clear the way I say, allow me to pass,
I want at once with Arjuna to come across.

Brisaketu—Brisaketu my name, Karna my father's
If you have strength to fight your way out,
Do so, by the aid of your bow and arrow stout.

Sudhanwa—Your body is quite sacred. So far as
I've heard
In your childhood a hungry Brahmin¹ to be
served,

1. Sree Krishna tested Karna's charity in this way and restored
Brisaketu to life at the time of dinner.

Your brave father Karna the Charitable,
—It may be true or a fable unreliable—
Sacrificed your body for his comfort.
So, afraid I'm to wound you with arrows' draft.

Brisaketu—If really in such a fright you are,
To free the horse ask the king, your father,
With Arjuna to make an alliance,
Admitting rout with an oath of allegiance.

Sudhanwa—My father to be asked to admit
surrender,
While his unconquerable son stands here !
An arrogance too high ! Quite intolerable !
Take up your arms, I'll soon make you gentle.
(Brisaketu fights and being defeated leaves the field)
(Arjuna comes forward)

Arjuna—Ye Pandava soldiers ! Block the path.
(Sudhanwa confronting him)

Sudhanwa—Warrior Arjuna ! It'll be all froth.
Quite helpless are the Pandava-Yadava army.
Except Sree Krishna, hero of Yadava progeny,
Who can face me here to oppose my advance ?
See, I kill your charioteer at a glance.
*(Arjuna's charioteer is killed and Arjuna comes down
on the ground)*

Hear me, you holder of the Gandiva¹ bow !

1. A mighty bow which none but Arjuna could wield.

As Kurukshetra-victor you've a pride hollow;
Tell me which battles on earth you've won
Without Sree Krishna's aid, you alone ?
Your brother Karna, born of the same mother.
With sharp shots, you hurt when he lost his car,
Brought to the ground Vishma, your old grand
father,
And Drona, your tutor of arms when he left war.
No fear; I grant you a pardon of safety.
Down as you are, to hurt you I feel a pity.
Deprived of kingdom when you lived in a forest,
Requests were sent to king Duryadhan in earnest
That you five Pandavas would be fully content,
If for you to live in, five villages were lent.
Battles at Kurukshetra having been won,
When you Pandavas regain'd the lost throne,
Your thirst for more dominion you couldn't
quench.
Moon got in hand, men want to get the sun
within range.
Conquering small kingdoms to found an empire
vast,
From place to place like a fiend you are roving
fast;
Devastating one small kingdom after another,
Throwing the old dynasties of India to disaster,
You are bringing ruin to the whole country.
For this ravage, your horse-sacrifice a mere plea.

My bosom friend ! From Sudhanwa I got a
reproach,
To cheer up your Arjuna would you not
approach !
(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II.

City of Dwarka—Sree Krishna's palace.

(*Enter Sree Krishna and Rukmini*)

Rukmini—O' Lord of Dwarka! Tied by chord of cordial love and friendship of the Pandavas you spent some years in Hastina. In your absence we the female inmates were living almost a dead life. Now getting you back here we feel as if we have been restored to a new life. Keeping yourself unarmed how you had faced the great rival warriors of your friend Arjuna—such as Vishma, Drona, Karna, Jayadratha etc. in the battle-field and have them destroyed by Arjuna, you told us in gossip. But hitherto you kept us in the dark as to how our dear nephew, Avimannu, the only son of your beloved sister Suvadra, fell in battle. "Our dear Avi is no more on earth" this heart-rending news has now thrown all the house-wives to the bitterest grief.

All women are crying shame on your "Sree Krishna" name as being the Controller of Time, and Allayer of Death-fear. Alas ! What a calamitous news it is ? I feel as if I still see the moon-like bright face of Avi float before my eyes. Why you kept suppressed Avi's death-report and why you did not care to defend him against his opponents I feel a great curiosity to know.

Sree Krishna—Death-report of any one should not be broken all at once before his or her kinsmen. It never remains suppressed long ; through some source or other it leaks out. Besides, had I given you that sad news just after my return here you could not have enjoyed the pleasure you did enjoy for the time being by my presence here after long absence. This is the reason why I did not break the sad news then and there. You know every creature is subject to death and none can escape it.

Rukmini—But people believe your "Krishna" name can kill Death-fear and can turn the tide of time.

Sree Krishna—Yes, my name removes the pangs of death but not the death itself which is

the rule of creation for the transmigration of soul into a new life. It is true I am Creator of Time, but my power of control has been delegated to Time's hands. By Time's rule or as an effect of the merit and demerit of past deeds creatures are to take repeated births on earth for a short space of time fixed by Time himself, the appointed time being over, creatures have to leave this world. I am a mere spectator of these daily occurrences and cannot exercise my power as Creator over Time. Human being is the highest order of all beings of Time on earth. By Time's rule or as the law of Nature in the mind of all human beings, during their short span of life, innumerable hopes and desires rise and fall like countless waves dashed into foam upon the bleak sea-beach. However, amidst all these bubble-like desires lies hidden one most imperceptibly thin desire with irresistible impulse which is the root of birth. Only men with extra-ordinary gifts and talents can detect it. So they are resolute from the beginning of their perceptible existence to form their modes of life after it. Others cannot detect it and allow themselves to be led astray with the dashing of other desires like straws by so many waves on the sea. Consequently with their rise

and fall in life men are to leave behind them a good or bad name according to the desire they pursue in their life time. The result is they have to take repeated births and cannot get salvation unless and until they pursue one fixed and definite principle in one life. This mysticism is very difficult to understand. I shall try to explain it to you another occasion.

Now as to Avi's fall in battle I only let you know that in the corner of his heart he cherished the irresistible thin desire that he would leave behind him the name of being reckoned as the greatest hero of his time. In the fury of the battle the impulse of that thin desire was echoed in the hearts of his opponents and kindled the flame of anger in them to have him destroyed by seven veterans such as Drona, Karna, Kripa, Aswathama, Duryadhan, Dushasan and Shakuni in combination. You will no doubt admit the fighting of a warrior of sixteen years of age alone with those seven veterans is a glory of chivalry which has immortalised his name in the annals of heroism. You must know at the same time that the force of that thin imperceptible desire is so strong that had I proceeded to defend Avi with the earthly relation that he was my nephew I could not have saved

him. 'Thus you will see that there is no reasonable cause to mourn his loss. Like Avi, most of the Kaurava generals cherished in their heart's corner the thin desire of laying down their lives in open combat, seeing before them my 'Krishna' frame as being the possessor of six divine qualities, that is to say, God Himself on earth in human form. So I had to serve as a charioteer on Arjuna's car and had to have them destroyed at Arjuna's hands; Arjuna was a mere agent' for me being the direct doer of the action and it was not within Arjuna's power to destroy them. But the mystery is that men when in prosperity seldom care to remember me and when in adversity they do not fail to cast on my name any sort of stigma, if they cannot get relief and are to succumb in adversity. *However in so doing they get some relief of their mental distress for the time being. Such is the glory of my name.*' Some illustrative descriptions will be narrated to you. Now I have to start for Bhadrabati city at once.

Rukmini—May I ask you, my Lord, why you want to leave us again.

Sree Krishna—Certainly. You are aware of my assumption of different forms on earth in

1. A reading of "Gita" will explain this.

different ages of the world. Having worshipped my image of Nrisingha, Queen of Bhadrabati has got two sons whose inmost thin desire also is that they should die the death of heroes in battle-field, seeing me before their eyes. They are born with a particle of my superhuman power. The eldest son has thrown my friend Arjuna in distress, Arjuna remembers me now. I am to call Garuda at once. Please make yourself comfortable in another room.

(Exit Rukmini)

O' Binata's son, Garuda the Mighty! Present yourself before me at once.

(Garuda appears.)

Garuda—My thousand bows to you my Lord of Heaven. Why so abrupt a call on me on earth?

Sree Krishna—Convey me on your shoulder to Bhadrabati city and place me on Arjuna's car there.

Garuda—Your servant is ever ready. Mount please on my shoulder, my Lord.

[Exeunt]

SCENE III.

Battle-field—Battle at the east gate.

[*Enter Satyaki and Subeg*]

(*Sudhanwa appears*)

Sudhanwa—What a wonderful disposition of
troops !

Two leaders over each of the four groups.

I'll plunge today Pandavas' celebrity.

Hostile leaders ? Confront me with alacrity.

Satyaki—Don't you know Arjuna's supporter,
Satyaki ?

A fawn you and for a lion's jaw fully ready !

You will die an insect's death before my fiery
arrows.

Cheer up, Subeg, the rank and file who stand
morose.

Sudhanwa—A vain attempt ! 'Tis simply your
mind's bent.

Who in an open fight can with me contend ?

A destruction of common troops I disallow.

You vain Satyaki ? What's the good of a row ?

Make a concerted attack on me, I bring you to
bay,

Show me how with bow and arrow you can play.

(*Subeg and Satyaki fight and being defeated leave the field*)

[*Exit Sudhanwa*]

SCENE IV.

Battle-field—Battle at the south gate.

[*Enter Pradumna and Yubanaswa*]

(*Sudhanwa appears*)

Sudhanwa—Who the leaders here ? What do
you know of war ?

Come forward at once. Prove your valour.

Pradumna—Sree Krishna's son Pradumna with
Jubanaswa.

But a battle with a baby whom we love ?

Sudhanwa—O' Sree Krishna's son ? In woman's
bosom you live.

In a field how a return-love can I give ?

On this spot Sudhanwa's heart tough as iron.

An exchange of arms here a proof of affection.

(*Pradumna fights and being defeated leaves the field*)

O' King Yubanaswa ! So highly esteemed !

With the speed of a steed better leave the field,

Or you'll have, in a fight with this boy dauntless,

To suffer humiliation and trouble endless.

(*Yubanaswa fights and being defeated leaves the field*)

[*Exit Sudhanwa*]

SCENE V.

Battle-field—Battle at the west gate.

(*Enter Kritabarma and Anusawwa*)

(*Sudhanwa appears*)

Sudhanwa—Haughty Pandavās' war-fame now
on the wane.

Confront me, you leaders, here who remain.

Kritabarma—Child! A vain parade of your own
power,
In an instant you'll see Death's door.

Sudhanwa—Who you ? What you are? I can't
bear delay,

Kritabarma—Brave Kritabarma, with me demon
Anusalwa.

Sudhanwa—Kritabarma ? Don't qualify
yourself as 'Brave';
Better 'A coward' on your forehead engrave.
On the Pandavas' camp in a stealthy night attack
Made by cruel Aswathama behind their back,
You had been a party to kill with sharp weapon
Soldiers lying asleep, surprised and numb.
Think what a detestable deed you did perform.
Now as a friend to Pandava's action you
conform.

A fie, a shame on your deceitful life;
I must see what artifice you play in strife.
Ask your demon companion also to take up arms.
I should like to clear the field of all its ferns.
(Kritabarma and Anusalwa fight and being defeated leave

the field)

(Exit Sudhanwa)

SCENE VI.

A thicket in the north-west corner of Bhadrabati fort.

(Enter two soldiers—One belonging to the Pandava army and the other to the Yadava army)

Y. Soldier—What you are at, brother, with your chin on the hilt of your sword ?

P. Soldier—Glad I'll be, if the state of your side first be told.

Y. Soldier—Brother ! Of the plight of our side what shall I tell !
See, brother, look at my feet, in a deep bog I felt,
Crossing many a ditch and many a pond
To be called a ghost's father I just respond.

P. Soldier—A pretty name, it must be of a new fashion.

Y. Soldier—Don't you see, brother, out of my breath I'm gone.

Our two leaders, fat as bull, stood against,
By their side we too stood, striking our breast.
With arrows on his bow the child gave a
pressure.

They two cried out at once, "O' Father,
O' Father."

At last they took to their heels for a straight
flight,

- ' We too were astounded to see their plight.
Bellowing as a bull pursued by a hound,
With rise and fall I'm here, crossing the mound.
The child looked to be of very soft sinews,
• But in his belly, brother, battle-seeds profuse.

P. Soldier—Yes, brother ! The affair a bit
too huge.

- Thirteen inches egg in twelve inches goose.
Troops on our side stood packed in a shoal,
As in a wide shallow pond swim the tadpole;
• The child bending his bow sent a dart to
squeeze,
It ran through like a black cobra's sneeze,
Cut smoothly the neck of our chief's car-driver,
As by a pair of scissors is cut a tuft of hair.
Our chief cries "Friend Krishna! Come on
the car,"
"Or I find no way how to escape the danger."

Y. Soldier—May I hear, brother, what came
after !

P. Soldier—Soon came a thundering blast of fight
severe.
When rose straight our skin's hair in horror.

Most of us took to moving on all fours,
At last I'm here, leaving the concourse.

Y. Soldier—Tush, tush, brother, as if I hear his twang.

P. Soldier—Is he coming here, all of us to sponge ?

Y. Soldier—Let us pillage a village and then be bound for home.

(*Sudhanwa appears*)

Sudhanwa—Who you ? Why do you throng here ?

Y. Soldier—Ah ! Sire child here ! We lay down our swords. Please do not bang us with your Twang¹.

Sudhanwa—Perhaps you are Pandava soldiers scheming here to plunder the village.

Y. Soldier—No, Sire, no. (Pointing out the P. Soldier). Their car-driver's head is cut off. There will be no more fight. To homeway we all are to fare. This what we were talking about. Nothing else, Sire, nothing else. But please, do not stain your hands by killing moles.

I. Sound produced by the bow-string when arrows are discharged.

Sudhanwa—(*Aside*) Ah! May I not see then
 Sree Krishna in the battle-field. (*Openly*) No
 • fear. I'll do you no harm. Can you bring me
 the news if any other charioteer has been
 engaged by your chief in the meantime. If you
 can fetch me this news you shall get this reward.
 • (showing his pearl necklace)

Y. Soldier—Sire ! You will get it in a moment.
 (Towards the P. Soldier) Brother ! Follow me,
 there will be half and half.*

(*Exit two soldiers*)

Sudhanwa—Remembering whose sweet ambrosial
 name,
 I got relief from the severe burning pain,
 Calling to mind the assemblage of whose quality,
 In all ages, Manu's descendants, the humanity,
 Offer fruits and flowers for whose adoration,
^{Alone all other offerings, self-abnegation}
 That absolute Spirit, the source of all sensation,
 As Sree Krishna in human form come from
 heaven.
 Seeing before me that Essence of the Universe,
 If to five elements this body I can disperse,
 I may break the hard links of Time's crooked
 control,
 I'll not have to suffer repeated births' trouble.
 But of the two soldiers, there's yet no news!

Now I've got this knowledge, O' Ocean of
virtues!

Unless a drop of grace you lend, in Thine path
no friend.

Pay me a visit, pay a visit, O' all men's refuge
and friend.

(Exit Sudhanwa).

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Battle-field at the north gate of Bhadrabati fort.

(Enter Arjuna with his eyes closed, by the side of his car)

*(Enter Satyaki, Subeg, Pradumna, Yubanaswa,
Kritabarma and Anusakwa)*

Satyaki—On our bows we set all arrows as to us
known,
In the twinkling of an eye, Sudhanwa struck
them down,
See, Arjuna, we look red as Kinsook flower;
Brave chief! Do what you deem fit and proper.
As plantain trees fall down before a destructive
tempest,
So Sudhanwa's shots visited our army as a pest.

Kritabarma—At Kurukshetra I saw Avi's valour,
Sudhanwa's skill exceeds that of his in this war.
'Sudhanwa'¹ this name fits him full and fair.

(Sree Krishna is placed on Arjuna's car by Garuda)
(Sings Sree Krishna)

Open your eyes, friend, open your eyes,

On your car I am come.

My dwarfish form to see on it,

Know to be the charioteer-soul to save births to come.

(Sudhanwa appears) .

1. Bengali meaning - a very good archer.

Sudhanwa—How lucky you, Partha! How happy
you are !

I too, seeing Sree Krishna on your car.

In three worlds there's not a devotee like you,
I won't slight you again, His heart will rue.

Arjuna—I can't praise, Sudhanwa, your bravery
too high,

Indifferent I was to fight, seeing you a boy.

But you'll not escape my hands, I make this vow,
I'll take your head by these three arrows on bow.

Lay down your arms, brave boy, better admit
submission,

I'll carry you on breast, to sit you by
Yudhisthira on throne.

Sudhanwa—I thank you, hero Kiritee, for your
good wish.

But a vanity on your part your heart does n't
miss.

You say "Indifferent !" ~ "Indifferent" not at all.

Reins of mind being put in whose hands small,

This car of body by senses of ten¹ horses drawn

Moves on earth without any grave obstruction,

You were awaiting the arrival on your car,

I am quite sure, of that best charioteer.

Hear my words now, you brave Dhananjoy²!

1 Feet, hands, eyes, ears, nostrils. 2. Surname of Arjuna.

My rival warrior, worthy of praise and joy,
There was only one—Avimannu, your brave son,
You did not see when with seven veterans he
fought alone.

Counting yourself, I see, eight archers here you
stand,

Throw at me all arms that you have in hand.
If Sree Krishna approves, on me make a joint
attack,

I'll defeat you all, as a lion's cub defeats a pack;
By this one arrow I'll break down your those
three,

Before Sree Krishna this my vow plain and free.

Sree Krishna—Why, my friend ! Do you make
so hard a resolution ?

King Hansadhwaj's son keeps strength
superhuman.

Sudhanwa's defeat quite difficult and uncertain.

Arjuna—Whose will brings creation, preservation,
destruction,

By *whose* will the crippled climb over high
mountain,

By *whose* will, the sea roars with exultation,

By *whose* will, shine in sky the moon and the

sun.

If He wills it, on earth nothing is uncertain.

Uncertainty by Thine grace will prove certain.

(*Fights with Sudhanwa.*)

Sudhanwa—See, Arjuna, your pride of hero is
brought down.

Your three arrows are cut into two by mine one.

(*Arjuna looks down in shame*)

Sree Krishna—Why do you look sad, my friend,
why bend the brow !

Shoot a Vaishnav arrow from the string of your
bow,

Aiming at the broken arrow to rise from the
ground ;

To do the needful immediately it'll bound.

(*Arjuna does as he is told*)

Sudhanwa—Ah ! Dear father ! I couldn't fulfil
your desire.

O' Sree Krishna ! Show me your divine frame
at my last hour.

(*Falls on the ground with his head severed*)

Sree Krishna—Stronger than Sudhanwa his
brother Surath ;

All leaders to go back to their respective post.

[*Exit all leaders*]

Brave Sudhanwa was a great devotee of mine in this age. Garuda the Mighty, pick up sharp his severed head and throw it down in the Ganges-Jumna confluence.

(*Garuda appears and takes away the head with his beak*)

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE II.

Battle-field at the west gate of the fort.

[*Enter Surath speaking to himself*]

Surath—Dispersed enemy are coming back in swarms again with great row. Has Sudhanwa fallen in battle? I can no longer remain within the fort.

(*openly*)

Let us be out, ye Bhadrabati cavalry !
Charge the enemy with all our chivalry.
Lions cubs must not bear foxes' revelry.

(*Opens the fort-gate and meets those seven leaders before they reach their destination*)

Come one by one, or come all. See this sharp-edged sword. Run away with your lives at once, or it will soon take your head.

(*One leader after another fights with Surath and being defeated leaves the field*)

[*Arjuna with Sree Krishna on car appears and
faces Surath*]

Arjuna—Child ! Leave the field. Flee for
your life and take protection within the gate, or
you shall meet your brother's fate.

Surath—Hypocrite ! I think it is you who have
killed my brother. I will take you up with
the car and throw it to dive in the sea-water.

(*Proceeds to lift-up the car*)

Sree Krishna—Stronger than Sudhanwa is he,
though younger in age.
Friend ! Don't give him the sought-for
advantage.

(*Arjuna strikes Surath with a sharp arrow*)

Surath—O' Sree Krishna ! Is this the way in
which you made the Pandavas win the Kuruk-
shetra battles ! Father, father ! I am your
unworthy son. O' Sree Krishna ! Forgive me.
Show me your divine frame.

(*Falls on the ground and dies*)

Arjuna—What cruelty dwells in Kshatra religion !
I had to kill without pity two champions
young !

Tell me Sree Krishna, tell me Narayana,

On Arjuna what more your hard dictum !

Sree Krishna—Time fixed when over, on earth
no one remains.

World is an illusion which brings in relations,
A deep-pondering leads one to the
conclusion :—

All a vacuum—this world a vacuum.

Nothing to think but to sing “Om, Taut,
Saut, Om.”

So to enable the soul to soar to the highest Dome.
Wipe away your sorrow, friend, let us be brief,
From worldly ties the princes desired to get
relief,

Seeing my “Krishna” frame to be God Himself.
I’m bound to fulfil my votary’s hope, be he a
whelp.

Let us now tramp on to see the king in his
bereavement.

Console him with all sorts of our kind treatment.

I’m to return to Dwarka City in great haste,

As on my way home there’s a harder test.

[Exit Sree Krishna and Arjuna]

SCENE III.

The Ganges-Jumna confluence—Ganges bank.

(Enters Lubdhak)

Lubdhak—This the place where the Jumna and
the Ganges join.

To suck the life-blood without taking her life,
 To break her modesty his mind on the stride.
 Oh! No! This should n't be! Let me pacify
 my mind !

Why a restless stag should I be to track a hind!
(Strolls about)

Oh ! What an attracting beauty does this
 place hold !

None can forget it in life, once who will it
 behold.

Dark Jumna water to mix, with the Ganges
 white.

Flows zig-zag, girdling the bank sandy and
 bright.

It looks as if Sree Krishna bending his waist
 thin

Stretches his dark-blue arm smiling Radha to pin.

Rise to the bank giggles of ripples raised by the
 breeze,

It seems as if Sree Krishna flutes 'Radha' name
 to seize.

Name 'Sree Krishna' must be all spells' sum and
 substance,

By peculiar virtue of this place I've got it by
 chance.

That proud Sumati I'll bring in snare by this
 spell strong

Oh ! Abused me she as 'Base Chandal'
 I'll avenge the wrong.
(Strolls about again)

To clasp her with arms exceeded Cupid's margin.
Sree Hari with a smile gave him an embrace

close,

To bring him to senses, to set his mind at repose.

The co-hered form became half-dark, half white,

The water looks so, where these two rivers unite.

I can't speak too much of the scenery of this place.

But to-day I see Hara proceeds Hari to aggress;

As if, of brothers two, one to please his consort

dear

Looks upon the other as one of his enemies

bitter.

I can not determine, if this be the sports of gods,

Or seeds of human mistrust to lie hidden in pods.

Now let me take a bath in this holy Ganges river,

To the name of god Siva, pour oblation of water,

Then covering the confluence bed with fogs

dense,

Await Garuda's advent at Siva's orders tense.

(*Takes his seat on the Ganges bank far remote
from Lubdhak*)

[*Garuda appears with the severed head*]

Garuda—(Speaking to himself)

The all-holding conformation of Sree Hari

From place to place with ease on my back I carry,

But this tiny head of a human formation,

Seems to me as heavy as the Sumeru¹ mountain,
Losing my direct way on account of fogs here,
I could not determine the confluence-water.
I'm now too tired to carry this human head,
On the bank of this river let me be abed.

(*Placing the head on the Ganges bank takes his rest, when
Nandi rises up*)

Nandi—Ah! Brother Garuda, king of birds here!
From heaven a straight alight on earth! Why
so favour!

Garuda—Who? Brother Nandi! I had to go
a great way off,
To Bhadrabati city; from there that head to
bring off.
On me my Lord Sree Krishna has the
commission,
That head to be thrown down in Ganges-Jumna
junction.

Nandi—But why on the Ganges bank have you
put it?

Garuda—Don't prattle much now. I'm too
fatigued.

Nandi—You should n't have kept it here without
my consent.

1. Perhaps North pole is mentioned as a mountain in mythology.

Garuda—What's the objection there ? What's your intent !

Nandi—From His feet your Lord dropped the
Ganges down,
On his head my Lord Siva took her to be his
crown.
Your Lord's all sports on the Jumna bank and
water,
The Ganges was so near but he crossed it never,
Perhaps o'er the Ganges to keep his claim
former,
He has sent you, his faithful attendant, here.
Siva's attendant I am, it is also my plank
Not to allow you to sit on the Ganges bank ;
Go and tell your Lord, I know best his prank.

Garuda—So much arrogance ! Dare you make
such a slight !
A phantom must have prepossessed you tight.
Too much tired I'm or I could make you leave
the whim,
To set you right, block head, would have been
my pastime.

Nandi—Hush ! An oviparous bird keeps so
much strength !

Garuda—Whose parentage not known must be of
low birth.

If you keep so much hatred for species of birds,
Have you a better title than a ghost of Siva's
wards !

To all it is known I'am sage Kasyapa's issue,
My brother is the Sun god who is world's tissue.
My step mother once put my own mother in
bondage;

To free her from slavery she accepted by pledge,
I flew to heaven to bring the ransom-nectar¹,
There with different gods I had to make war.
All of them I routed, though I had no comrade,
Both Hara and Hari were surpris'd to see the
raid.

No god could stand me but Sree Hari the
Almighty.

This is why I'm called Garuda the Mighty.
If you pick a quarrel with me without any cause,
Due retaliation you'll get, at my sharp claws,
With these my long and strong wings wrapping
you up

1. The allusion is that a dispute arose between Binata and Kadru co-wives of Kasyapa Rishi as to whether god Jupiter's horse was black or white. Binata said "White", Kadru said "Black". The condition was, if found the reverse, one should be slave to the other. Kadru ordered her children who were black snakes to cover entirely the horse's body and they did so. The co-wives one day went to see the horse which was found to be black. So Binata became a slave to Kadru. The latter however, said to the former that she would release her if nectar was brought from heaven on earth for the serpents to devour it.

I'll sling you down in sea-water or in a gulf.

Nandi—In his own place one considers himself
too strong.
Mind, this is earth and not your airy region.
Proud Bird ! How can you make an exertion ?

Garuda—Oh, ho ! I see on your part there's a
great hub-bub.
Barbarian ! Let me see how much strength
you have.

*(Attacks Nandi, fights with him, then rises to the sky to
gather force when Nandi runs away with the severed
head in his hand)*

Nandi—Brother Garuda ! I've got what
I aimed at,
With Sudhanwa's head now I gladly depart,
On the Ganges bank you may lie down flat.
[Exit Nandi]

Garuda—Tricks of Siva's follower now I fully
realise,
For Sudhanwa's head he made this enterprise.
Sages say :—"On an unknown person place no
trust,
Before doomed decay pride go must."
Of Nandi's such light treatment to me this the
reason,

What shall I say when my Lord charges me
with treason !

Good inhabitants of Prayag ! Hear me, please,
you all :—

“With me, Nandi, Siva’s slave, picked a quarrel,
He won’t be able to defeat me when he thought,
Taking Sudhanwa’s head he made a trot ;

Bear witness to this fact, this my request to
you all,

If Sree Krishna condemns me, I’ll send you
a call ;

Know also that this spot touched by Sudhanwa’s
head

As to holiness will vie with Sree Hari’s
heavenly bed ;

Keep vivid in your memory at the same time,
‘Above all places of pilgrimage this Prayag’ fine
From this day on earth will be reckoned as *king*.

If coming here a most sinful human being
Shaves his head and at the confluence takes a
bath,

1. From a very long time—how long none can tell—it has become one of the customary rites of the Hindus to shave hair of their head and take a bath in the confluence water to obtain purity of body and mind, especially for sinful lives to be admitted into life of purity. Basing on this usage and keeping concord with the anecdotes about the sanctity of Prayag (as narrated in the Bengali Mahabharat by the poet Kashiram) this book of Drama is written. If in it any failings are noticed, good readers will kindly ignore them and pardon the writer. Failings of a drama-writer, I hope, are always pardonable.

Humble writer.

All his accumulated sins of this birth
Will be got rid of and he'll gain what he'll
intend,
His spirit 'll go to Sree Hari's abode at life's end.

(Lubdhak rises up speaking to himself)

Lubdhak—A fowler I was on the river Saraju's
edge,
Where came one day Sumati with her
god-longed visage
To raise in my mind a thought unwise and
vicious,
To make me dress as a saint conspicuous.
Vowed I, through practice gaining magical
power,
I must enjoy her roundish limbs and skin fair,
So I took my seat here in the appearance of a
saint
And I chanced to see sports of our gods latent.
Why my mind still wants that vile enjoyment !
My past birth must have been of animal descent.
Unless beastly propensities are extirpated,
In a saint seat Sree Krishna's visit can't be
expected.

(Strolls about)

In the confluence water let me first take a bath,
To indulge in my pent-up lust proceed the path.

(Dips in the confluence water)

O' Prayag water! Grant this my only prayer:—
"I may represent Sumati's mate hereafter."

(Rising up examines his feature in the clear water)

Ah! Now I look some body else but fowler

Lubdhak,
This must be that of Sumati's husband's look.

(Exit Lubdhak)

[Some citizens of Prayag appear and sing]

What an ambrosia does lie in "Sree Hari" name!
Hunger and thirst fly away,
That name turns Kali's sword into Sree Krishna's flute,
It goes on "Radha", "Radha" to say.

&c.

[Exeunt]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Bhadrabati Palace—King's Court.

[*Enter Hansadhvaj, Minister and Courtiers*]

Hansadhvaj—• Ah! My Sudhanwa, Surath, two
• flowers of heroes !
I shall not see again your faces bright as rose.
The strength of my two old arms is for ever gone,
Who'll bring to me in chains Krishna-Arjun !
In open fight fell you both and are gone to
heaven;
Where's that heaven or the path leading to
that realm !
'To your wretched father soon make it known.
Oh! In the fire of grief over a son what a burn !
To this is nothing the bite of a hundred scorpion.
Oh ! Minister ! How can I get relief from this
pain!
My fighting men of Bhadrabati ! Where you
are ?
For a further fight just yourselves prepare;
With all implements of war be equipped soon,
Let us march out the enemy to fall upon.

'To fetter Krishna-Arjuna let us be gone,
 With loud utterance of name 'Krishna', 'Krishna,'
 Holding in each hand a sharp and unsheathed
sword,
 Trace the path by my Sudhanwa-Surati just trod.
 I'll keep Krishna chain'd in Nrisingha's temple,
 And place Arjuna at the gate to draw vehicle,
 Or perish in the attempt at the latter's hand,
 If then from my heart this strong burn I can
disband.

(*Enter Kotal*)

Kotal—My bow to Gracious King and Courtiers.
 At the gate are come two rival warriors,
 Unarmed they are. For entrance they want orders.

Courtiers—For the death of princes, king is
mad with grief.
 Minister! Please say what answer the man
should give.

Minister—Good king ! Refrain, please, from
this rash hostility,
 Since now you stand like the trunk of a
branchless tree;
 Remnants of Bhadrabati force are of no value,
 Before Pandava-Yadava force they will rue.
 Two hostile warriors as unarmed are come,

With you, I suppose, they desire a union.
Defeated as you are, just see and confess
Really a good heart the Pandavas do possess.
For the good of the kingdom and that of the
people,
Give up inimical mood, please take my counsel,
"Run to the gate as unarmed and on bare-foot,
Bring the strangers here, with them do not moot."
Counsellors ! Contribute your advice suitable.

Courtiers—With a powerful foe peace always
desirable.

[Exit Hansadhwaja and re-enters with Krishna-Arjuna]

Sree Krishna—O' Ruler of men ! You had a
mind to bind us two,
A guest I'm with Arjuna who your two sons
slew.
You may do unto us what you think better,
To soothe your grief what shall I say,
a sage you are.
By his son's death your son-slayer has the same
wound,
By the princes' fall, in a deeper grief he is
drown'd.
He is come to solicit your kind friendship ;
Kshatra religion as you know, is full of hardship.

For his own son's death he himself weeps and
wails,

But to make others weep he scarcely fails.

The two princes observing the Kshatra virtue
Are gone to heaven, dying the death of heroes
true.

A true-born Kshatriya as you are, a dutiful king,
Away from your heart such a grief you should
fling.

A votary of mine you are, so is your queen,
So you got two worthy sons as deserved you
clean.

In this age Sudhanwa was my greatest devotee,
I've his head thrown down where the Jumna-
Ganges unite.

By his head's touch Prayag tops the list of
pilgrimage.
Ally the Pandavas, forgetting your grief and
rage.

*(Sree Krishna places Arjuna's right hand on that of the
king)*

Hansadhwaj—Sports Thou playest, humanity
fails to assert,
My bow to Thee, Sree Krishna, mystic sound
; 'Om' Thou art.
Essence of the Universe, its beginning and end.

In Golden age first as a Fish¹ Thou didst
Thyself send,
Then as a Tortoise², a Boar³, and a Lion-headed⁴
man.
In the next age a Dwarf⁵ was Thine form
quite human.
To annihilate the Kshatriyas Thou wert
Parashuram⁶.
To kill Ravana Thou wert 'Rama' in Raghu's
clan.
In this third age 'Krishna⁸ and Balarama⁹
Thou art,
—Brothers of two like features moving on one
chart.
I bow, O' All-holder, to Thine each above form,
Thou art also to come as 'Kalki'¹⁰ in the age to
come.
Thine graceful look of 'Sree Krishna' I longed
to perceive,
Be my guest, please, remove Thine journey's
fatigue,
Krishna-Arjuna of one heart, Nara-Narayana,
Let me clasp you both that I may forget grief
for son.

(Enter Queen with Kubalaya)

1-9. According to Hindu Mythology these nine forms Supreme God took.

10. The future incarnation.

Queen—Our good luck it must be that 'Krishna'.
moon's ray

In our Bhadrabati palace heralds the day.

Say, Krishna, tell me, O' Protector of the world.

On this insignificant woman's part what's her
fault.

Of my two sons why did you like to bereave me?

A silly woman I'm, how your sports can I see !

With what attributes bound you Pāndu's sons ?

Other kings on the face of earth have done
what wrongs ?

Wherever you happen to pay your visit,

Women are to shed tears of eyes forthwith.

Whoever wants you cannot go without tears.

We, afflicted Bhadrabati women, pour our purse ;

Our tears of eyes for your salutation,

At your crimson feet this our best devotion.

Aha ! My sons—dear Sudhanwa, Surath !

Show me, your unfortunate mother, show the
path

Following which she may meet you where

you are gone.

Come to my breast, come to my breast,

my grief atone.

(Throws herself at Sree Krishna's feet)

(Sings Kubalaya)

Women we are, with what things may we adore you ?

What resources may we have ?

What is dear to women is brought destruction,

For womankind you keep so much love.

Away my husband you swept, my mother of her two sons
bereft,

How many women in all ages to weep you left,

An account of it who but you can give !

(Throws herself at Sree Krishna's feet)

Hansadhwaj—Rise up, rise up, dear Queen and Kubalaya. We must not fail in our duty towards our guest, be he our foe or friend—. What is past cannot be recalled. Let us now go to the inner apartment with our guests and arrange for their feasting.

*(Exit Hansadhwaj, Queen, Kubalaya,
Sree Krishna, Arjuna)*

[Exeunt]

SCENE II.

The Jumna bank.

*(Enter Sree Krishna in the guise of a beggar boy
as seated under a Kadamba tree)*

Beggar boy—Above all temples of gods and
goddesses on earth,
Love I truly a votary's true and simple heart.

Simple Dhanapati roving hither and thither
Comes at last on the bank of this Jumna river.
Employing some tricks on him to accompany me,
I'll arrive just in time to save Sumati Sati.

[*Enter Dhanapati speaking to himself*]

Dhanapati—O' Krishna! Thinking you are son of the childless,
I search'd for you in towns, villages and wilderness.

'Tis still my hope—clasping you with my arms
I'll return home in loving terms Sumati to sue—
“See, for you what a lovely lad with me

I've brought,
Let us nourish him as a son, our life throughout.
Seeing all day long his bright look and pure face,
All our earthly miseries let us efface."

Sree Krishna now reigns o'er far Dwarka city,
Why with Jumna bank'should he keep affinity?
The rumour that he strolls here not reliable,
None but a simpleton for such a thing should
ramble.

I forgot Sumati, left my men and money.
I realise now my project was not at all bonny.
Father of the world He is, who all creatures
feeds,

In whose meditation saints take their seats,
 —That sage-aspired thing, the Supreme Being,
 Him my heart wants to bring up as our
 offspring !
 What an inordinate ambition on my part !
 Why came such an inclination before my heart !
 It brings only heart's sufferings and deep despair.
 I must make a further search near Jumna water.
 If unsuccessful, let this Jumna be my doom,
 With an empty heart I won't go back to my
 home.

(*Sings the beggar boy*)

Flows in your heart stream of Sumati's love,
 Like Falgu river's underground current.
 Against that stream your thoughts you swim,
 How can you keep your mind under restraint !
 Waves of stream flow towards edge,
 Waves of love run over a hedge,
 Raise one up breathless merging in surge,
 The stream of love always plays this bent.
 Towards home turn your face,
 Think it not to be a disgrace,
 Me in your front try to place,
 To homely delight you may then give vent.
 Who paints in heart image of mine,
 Throughout his life he is to pine,
 I burn him to turn gold genuine,
 At last I become his servant obedient.

Dhanapati—(*Speaking to himself*) .

Who the boy there under the Kadamba tree ?

The gist of his song as if speaks of some thing with which my mind is occupied. Is he that very boy whom my heart seeks! He is known to be a boy of dark-blue complexion while this lad looks to be of gold complexion. Is he then that beggar boy the news of whose arrival at my doors tossed my mind and I at once left home to make a search for the boy whom my heart wants. As I feared I might be caught by Sumati I did not try to see the beggar boy. Why should he care to come here! In this deserted place who will give him alms! But such a matchless beauty can any human lad be expected to possess! Then what is he! Is it then illusion of some god to delude me! Ah! There he goes! Whoever or whatever he may be, I must approach him. (Openly when within the hearing of the boy,) O' God! O' Narayana! Am I to wander this way and that with my mental agony remaining as it is for ever? Shall I not get the true path?

Beggar boy—Who you, Sir! What are you muttering about and pursuing me at the same time? What's your intention? I am a mere beggar boy, you see. What can you expect from me!

Dhanapati—(*Aside*)

What a sweet voice! He cannot but be that

very boy whom I am in search of. No answer I should give now. Let me see what further questions he puts to me. (*Openly*) O' My good God ! Will you not help me to get at the right path to gain what I have in view ! (with a deep sigh)

Beggar boy—Excuse me, Sir ! You seem to be a peculiar man. Why don't you care to give a reply ? I suppose you are a stranger to this place. Perhaps, having lost your way home, you are taking the name of God with a view to get some help to find it out. If so, perhaps I can help you in the matter. Do you mean to return home ?

Dhanapati—My dear boy ! How could you surmise I might be a stranger to this place or I intended to return home ?

Beggar boy—Ah Sir ! • I am a beggar boy. I have to mix with persons of different tastes and pursuits, before I could earn my day's living wages. So, from their very appearance or at the slightest hint I can make out what they have in their mind. Let me ask you one question, Sir. As you are a stranger to this place ! why have you come here alone ?

Without a companion or a friend to guide you or lead you back to your home ?

Dhanapati—My dear boy ! What shall I say in reply to your question—an ambiguous one as it appears to me. I could only say that I started alone as I could not determine that on my return-journey (meaning retirement from this world) I must need the help of a friend to show me the proper way leading to my home. Perhaps I have now got one true friend before me to lead me on. O' God ! (Deep sigh.)

Beggar boy—Ah Sir ! I can't follow you. My question was a simple one but your reply seems to be at cross-purposes. Are you prepared to take up the cross ?

Dhanapati—Why not, my dear boy ? I must, if it be the will of God.

Beggar boy—God, God, God. I see, Sir, your every thing is God's. 'In your deep sigh—God' 'In your coming to a wrong path—God.' 'In your intention to return home—God.' As if God your adopted son.

Dhanapati—Go on, dear boy, go on.

Beggar boy—There will be none, Sir, there will be none, unless you yourself be true to your own.

Dhanapati—Then how could you say, brave boy, that you could lead me on to my home !

Beggar boy—You must have a notion, Sir, about the direction in which your home lies. If it be in the East and you happen to come to the West, you will naturally desire to be informed of the right direction first. When this is ascertained you will try to search out the way to destination. If you are fortunate to meet a guide on the way your troubles will be diminished and you will be enthusiastic to tread the path. You have to begin the work for yourself first. Perhaps I am now clear to you.

Dhanapati—Yes, my good lad. I thank you.

Beggar boy—Then fix your purpose, Sir, whether you would make a companion of me up to your home. If not, adieu.

Dhanapati—Brave boy ! I shall be quite happy, if you will kindly lead the way.

Beggar boy—Agreed, dear Sir. But I should like to let you know one thing—it is God's fun

to play 'Hide and Seek' with man. I have a hobby too—If any traveller coming in a secluded or a deserted place makes me his companion, I gladly lead him on, but on reaching a crowded place when he feels he is competent to travel alone and will not require my further help I leave him before an intricate cross-way so that he will have to rove this way and that and ask any body and every body to help him in his wandering. Please tell me now, if you would like to travel keeping me in the front or in front of me.

Dhanapati—Good boy ! It is good to travel, keeping you in full sight. Hitherto my back was turned towards you and I failed to determine the true path. Now as you have been kind enough to appear before me, I must travel, keeping you in front of me.

Beggar boy—Sir, I do not like much talk. Please follow me quietly.

(Exit Beggar boy and Dhanapati)

SCENE III.

City of Oudh—Dhanapati's mansion.

Inner apartment.

(Enter Sumati singing)

Where you are gone I have no information, why not back yet !
Deserted by you I live in woe, with tears my breast is wet.

Stay there where you please,

But live with mind's ease,

The stream of my mind's disease to reach you I cannot jet.

(Enter Malini)

Sumati—Dear Malini ! I see there is no hope of his return at all. I cannot console my mind any more. Since my bridal day I have had in this house two dear companions—he and you—. Without husband what's the good of a wife's existence ? O' Protector of the world ! If my protector is alive, send him back to me soon—This my prayer—. Malini ! What shall I do ? I cannot bear his absence any more. With what hope should I live in this house ?

Malini—Dear sister ! Be patient. I ask you what good it will bring by weeping day and night over a thing beyond the reach of our hands. Human attempt is fruitless, unless and until God favours it. If He wills it, He can send back Dada Babu in a moment or there is

little hope. You sent your men to different parts of the country. Most of them returned disappointed. What further can be done? Be patient, sister, be patient, now as you have dismissed all your men and have made this house practically a deserted one.

Sumati—My heart is a desert, Malini! My heart is now a desert.

Malini—Who can say there may not come a flood? There may be an inundation in one day if God wills it.

Outer apartment.

(Dhanapati-Lubdhak appears speaking to himself)

Dhanapati-Lubdhak—The information as far as I have been able to gather tells me this beautiful house must be Sumati's. I have been lurking behind it half the day. It is now dusk. Let me make an attempt to get in. But my feet do not dare proceed. My heart trembles, as if I still feel the scent of blood in my hands. But without risk there is no achievement. Wiving or perishing in the attempt let be my destiny.

(Repeated knocking at the door)

(Malini appears,)

Malini—Who you please ? (After opening the door) Ah ! Dear Dada Babu here ! Welcome, welcome. Come in please. Where did you go ? Abroad ! For trade-purpose ! Dear sister is about to turn mad brooding constantly over the alienation of your heart from her by keeping yourself aloof so long. (Exclaiming) Dear sister, dear sister ! Come out please. Dear Dada Babu is back. God has at last looked upon you.

Sumati—(From the inner apartment) Malini ! What do you cry about ? True or you are in jest !

Malini—(From the outer apartment) No, no ! Come out please at once. True. Take him up by the arm.

(*Sumati appears*)

Sumati—Strange ! No news at all so long ! How hard a man's heart may be !

(*Takes Dhanapati-Lubdhak by the arms to the inner apartment*)

Inner apartment.

Dhanapati-Lubdhak—There was no help. While coming back from my business place I fell in

the hands of robbers who looted all I had with me and made me a captive. How can you expect to get a news in this circumstances ? Some time after, I managed to escape from their hands. Ah ! You look so pale !

Sumati—It is God's grace on our lips that you could return home safe. Articles of merchandise ! Let them be lost. When you are alive I have every thing. Besides, what want we have ! Nothing at all. Please take your seat and wait a bit. I shall hear the details after making arrangements for your food and drink. (About to depart).

Dhanapati-Lubdhak—Look here please, you need not trouble yourself for my food and drink at present. I am to go out at once to make arrangements for the recovery of the lost goods—so very valuable they are. Please sit by me for a while. Meeting you after a long time my head is under a whirl. Let us enjoy ourselves in talks of love for a few moments.

Sumati—Be at ease please. Wash your face, hands and feet. Remove your fatigue. In the meantime let me make arrangements for your food and drink. This is my foremost duty. After

that, we may have enough time to hold other talks. Living with robbers you have become an altered man, I see. It is now time for your evening prayer. Don't you remember this ? (*Aside*) • Talks of love at the time of prayer. I never found him so, even in his youth. He • speaks also of his going away for business purpose. He left home abruptly. There was not seen the least sign of previous arrangements for his going abroad. His looks also appear unsteady. A grave suspicion arises in my mind. (*Openly*) Wait a bit—take rest please. I am coming after a word or two with Malini.

• (*Sumati on her way to the outer apartment—Lubdhak following her*)

Outer apartment.

(*Enter Dhanapati and the Beggar boy*)

Beggar boy—You have reached home. Now I may be gone.

Dhanapati—No, No! Just of your type we want a son.

(*Knocking at the door*)

Malini—Who you please ? (Supposing some neighbour) Our Dada Babu has come back just a

minute or two before. (After opening the door cries out at the top of her voice) What a curious thing ! Dear sister ! Dear madam ! Come here at once. Come here at once. A very strange thing here—an intricate affair. A second Dada Babu with that singer boy is come at our doors. Sister, sister ! Dear Madam. Don't delay a minute. That singer-boy must be a conjurer or I see an image of illusion. Sister ! A great danger here ! Come and see.

Dhanapati—O' Malini ! Why do you scream at the top of your voice ? What danger in the house ! Leave the door-sil, let me get in.

Malini—Wait a bit, Sir ! Confounded I a'm. Let madam come and settle the thing first.

(*Sumati appears, Dhanapati-Lubdhak takes his stand behind a pillar*)

Sumati—Malini ! Malini ! Why do you cry aloud again ? What do you mean to say ?

Malini—I say I can make neither head or tail of it. Just see with your own eyes whether there are now two Dada Babus or not. Is this singer boy playing a magical trick or am I dreaming awake !

Dhanapati—Could you not recognise me, Sumati! How have you secured a second Dhanapati? How long, and from where?

Sumati—O' my God ! O' Narayana ! O' Sree Hari ! •What' a fresh jeopardy you throw me into ! Both are alike in every part—in shape, •complexion and in voice too. An extremely curious thing. Never it was heard of or seen before. No, no ! Such a thing is said to have occurred once . It must be a deceptive play of a genius here to place me in 'Ahalya's' position. (At the beggar boy) O' Dear child ! O' my son—Sons of sages can say, without the help of •Astrology—So tell me, please, who of the two is my real husband. O' God ! O' Narayana ! A weak woman I am but I have no conscious guilt. Why do you put me in the position of a tainted woman ? O' Sree Hari ! O' Sree Krishna ! Save me from the danger ! O' Lord of the world ! Help me in picking my true husband.

(Sings the beggar boy)

Pick out, pick out, Sati, who is your own mate.
Both with longing looks gaze at me you to get.
To enjoy only who doth want,
Can he be a true husband !
The two in like forms stand,
Know, their merits have them so set.
Now pick out, dear Sati, your own mate

1. Indra (Jupiter God) taunted her
Gautama Rishi.

Malini—Dear madam ! Do you understand what the lad says in his song ? I have grasped it fully. Perhaps you can remember I told you that Dada Babu went out to bring that singer boy round. Don't you remember also "A fowler enchanted by your beauty came to seize you." There who stands behind the pillar must be that fowler and not our true Dada Babu. The other day I heard people say some strange story about Prayag. This jugglery must have some thing to do with Prayag's glory. It is beyond my comprehension. But take care sister, take care. Don't receive two Dada Babus in your favour.

Sumati—(Lifting up the beggar boy on her left waist) Dear Child ! Where will you flee now ! I have caught you at last. You are God Sree Krishna Himself. It is your deceptive sport. My son ! My darling ! My naughty witty boy ! You meant to play jockey ! (Undressing him) Now show me your grace and save me from disgrace.

(*Sings Sree Krishna*)

With two mates to fall in was your fate, Sati, do not weep.
There will be a row and slur, if you on earth long I keep.

I show the way of emancipation,
Comes down there a car from heaven,

To that unknown region you three should invisibly slip.
 Know, Salvation is attained when one repents deep

• **Dhanapati-Lubdhak** -- (Coming forward)

I perceive the riddle is revealed at last.

O' Gracious Sree Krishna ! O' Lord the Just !
 Even to the vilest of men, I see, kind Thou art,
 A proof of this is displayed in every part.
 In the despicable race of fowler I am born,
 Why in a foul deed shall I feel a bit of scorn !
 I was going to do what is done after low birth,
 O' All-wise ! Thou didst show me wisdom's
 worth.

Thy phenomenal temptation the feminine grace,
 • To see which god Siva himself was restless.
 A man's weak mind how can bestiality overcome !
 Me, a dunce not to speak of, even sages succumb.

Through Thine hest I could now taste
 The sweetness of 'Radha' name,
 To wake in human hearts the jocund parts
 Was Thine flute's game.

I am in joy to see the convoy
 For my protection,
 On human race Thine kindness
 I now well discern.

Throw behind, my beastly mind,
 Bent for womankind,
 Test in garb of woman chaste

How goddess of wisdom is lined.
Good company, thoughts balmy
Lend us good trait,
Mother Sumati ! You must be
Good thought's true portrait.
Give this swine dusts of those feet fine,
Save him the doomed hell ;
Pardon him the contemplated sin.
A mother's bliss entail.

(Throws himself at Sumati's feet)

[Rising up and looking at Sree Krishna]

I want not to soar to unasked-for heaven,
On earth 'Krishna' name is wealth above any gem.
I want to revert to my fowler's frame of before,
But to kill a bird—drake or duck—I'll try no
more.

I crave this boon—my complexion soon
Be the same,
As it was, when killing birds
Was my fond game.
With bow and arrow I want to rove
In woods by the sea-shore,
Also I entreat, Thine red feet
I leave not even in error.

Sree Krishna—A bath at PRAYAG gave you a tug

To gain this knowledge,
No longer you are that mean fowler
But a great sage.
Father's foe to kill, you had a will,
In your past life,
In your memory past birth's story
In time I'll make alive.

(*Exit Lubdhak, bowing to all*)

Malini—O' Dear singer lad ! Can nothing be
done for this poor woman ?

Sree Krishna—After death you shall meet us in
heaven.

Malini—(Closing her eyes) Then I may rest
assured that I may enter heaven.

(*Exit Sree Krishna, Dhanapati and Sumati*)

(After opening her eyes and finding none there)
Dear me ! Why did I shut my eyes ? In the
twinkling of an eye all three passed into heaven !
They say :—Heaven lies in good company. Ah
me ! Ah me ! I missed the opportunity of
making a closer intimacy with Dada Babu or I
could have accompanied him to heaven. Let me
now go to take a bath in Prayag water.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV.

Kuenlun mountains—Siva's abode.

(*Enter Siva and Durga às seated on a throne, Ganga standing behind Siva.*)

[*Appear girls of demi-gods, said to be choristers of heaven, singing and dancing*]

(*Song*)

Step by step let us proceed with measured beat.

Siva-worship'll, they say, help us to get mates sweet.

Two demi-gods there are,

Saraswati's sons they are,

If beats be out of order, an abashment'll be our meed.

Our youth is budding fast,

With its process we stand aghast,

Without lovers to our taste we'll suffer heart-burning heat.

Bright as our complexion is,

We want grooms reddish,

If black or whitish, we must not open our eyelid.

O' Siva our great god !

Throw mercy on our lot ;

Grant us grooms just, with sandal scented flowers you we greet.

(*Throw flowers on Siva's head*)

Siva—My good wishes to you—'Om Swasti', 'Om Swasti'.²

(*Exit the demi-gods*)

Dear Durga ! My Nandi has not turned up yet. It is long time that he left us. My mind

1. Goddess of music and learning.*

2. Be it so as you pray for.

is very anxious for him. Should we now send our attendant, the brave bull.

Durga—The Ganges-Jumna confluence is a great way off. It will take long time for the aged bull to reach there. It will be all the same if you send him or not. Nandi may cross him, if the bull takes a different path. Grassy plots in the Gangetic valley may tempt your bull. Yonder comes your Nandi. •

[*Enters Nandi*]

Nandi—Glory to Durga's mate, Siva, Sankara,
Hara,
The fearful Tripura demon-slayer. •
Through your boundless grace and favour,
Defeating Garuda, Vishnu's follower,
Your servant has been able to bring this head
here.

Siva—Admirable, Admirable ! My valiant
Nandi Kesar,
(*Turning to Durga*)

O' All-terrific ! O' Human skulls' bead-wearer !
To your bead this severed head string together.
Siva may not be accused hereafter.

Durga—Supreme Gōd, Sree Hāri's devotee as
you are,

Vaisnav Sudhanwa's head on my neck won't
look fair ;
On your neck, I say, you better suspend it,
I'm having it strung to your bone-bead.

Ganga—O' My good Siva ! What remedy for
me do you decide ?
Will this poor Ganga still on earth have to
abide ?

Siva—I've told you already all about this thing.
As in Vishnu's holy feet lies your origin,
Garuda, Vishnu's follower has decided it
right:—
At PRAYAG where the Jumna with you unite,
There your bank has been ranked as king
Of all holy places by Garuda's gifting.
Stay on earth till the expiry of Iron age,
As deliverer of sinners yourself engage ;
Thus driving troubles of mankind from sin and
woe
To your own place in heaven you are free to go.
(Exit Siva, Durga and Ganga)

Nandi—'Ganga'—a name that purifies the unholy,
'Durga'—a name that removes distress quickly,
Names of God as Brahma, Hari, Hara-Parvati,
O' Indian's ! Take the Trinity as Unity,

To seize any name that you choose, be ready,
Let controversial ways of religion be in treaty.
Then in the Iron age you shall not lose power
By Grace and command of Siva, the world's

Preceptor.

(Exit Nandi)

(Exeunt)

Drop Scene.

CONCLUSION.

"Naranancha Naradhipa"
(King is the manifestation of God)
Says our sacred Gitá.

"Dilliswara-báh, Jagadishwara-báh"
(The Emperor of Delhi is God Himself)

Was one day India's insigma.
(Hear-say about the Great Moghul Emperor
Akbar for his religious toleration)

So, "Good Britannia!" Rule India,
"Good Britannia!" Rule India.
(Since the British Government has granted to
the people full freedom of rights to perform
their religious rites).

Long live His Gracious Majesty George V.
King-Emperor of India.

Humble writer.

